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THE INDEPENDENT

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WEEKEND REVIEW

BLACKPOOL: LIVE AND UNLOVED
BY JOHN WALSH

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MAGAZINE

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Blair: My pledge to cut taxes

TONY BLAIR pledged yesterday to cut income tax levels and has rejected growing demands from within the Labour Party to raise money for public services by increasing the tax bills of high earners.

In an exclusive interview with *The Independent*, Mr Blair echoed Margaret Thatcher's response when her premiership was under fire, declaring there was "no alternative" to his economic policies and the way he runs the Labour Party.

Urging his party to "hold its nerve" during the world economic crisis, he ruled out action to bring down high interest rates and the high pound and said U-turns by previous governments had always ended in failure.

Mr Blair rejected proposals by Frank Field, the former minister for Welfare Reform, to impose a 50 per cent tax rate on people earning more than £100,000 a year.

The Prime Minister revealed that he intended to renew at the next general election Labour's pledge not to increase income tax rates during the current Parliament.

This will disappoint many in his party, including some cabinet ministers, who want Labour to leave open the option of taxing the very rich if it wins a second term.

"If you look at what is happening around the world, high marginal tax rates are coming down," said Mr Blair. "One of our key priorities, when it is consistent with a strong economy, is to get high marginal rates down for lower income families."

Mr Blair said there were "more imaginative ways" of raising money than increasing tax, such as joint projects involving the public and private sectors. "It is unpopular in some quarters, the unions don't like it, but that is definitely the way the world is going."

In his only interview ahead of Labour's annual conference in Blackpool, which starts tomorrow, Mr Blair conceded that he faces a setback because some left-wingers are expected to win election to the

BY ANDREW GRICE and DONALD MACINTYRE

party's National Executive Committee (NEC).

Privately, his allies fear the left will capture four of the six seats representing the constituency parties, with the rival Blairite slate winning only two. They admit that party modernisers were too slow to react to the left's threat.

Mr Blair accused the left-wing Grassroots Alliance of posing as "critical supporters of the Government" when they were really "outright opponents" and hiding the involvement of Liz Davies, one of its candidates, in the headline Labour Briefing group.

While admitting that the moderate candidates were out as well known to party members, he warned those left-wingers elected to the NEC not to use their positions as a

platform to attack the Government.

"Critical support of the Government is fine; outright opposition is very foolish," he said.

He understood why some Labour members would want critics of the Government to sit on the NEC, but insisted that gains for the left would not show that the party grass roots was turning against him. "There is no ideological alternative I can see being put forward to new Labour," he said. "I don't notice any desire in the Labour Party to return to the past. New Labour is the solution, not the problem."

The Prime Minister said he would make up his mind on proportional representation - one of the most difficult decisions he will face - after reading next month's report by a commission on reforming the voting system for the House of Commons under Lord Jenkins of Hillhead, the Liberal Democrat peer. Despite a cautious tone that will worry the Liberal Democrats, his remarks will fuel speculation that he will endorse the Jenkins plan for electoral reform but delay its implementation for some years.

"When we are talking about the legislative basis of the UK, we have to proceed with care," he said.

Asked whether he would honour last year's general election manifesto pledge to hold a referendum on proportional representation before the next election, Mr Blair replied: "Let us just see what Jenkins comes up with."

However, he suggested that he might call a joint referendum on proportional representation for elections to the House of Commons and the second stage of his reform of the House of Lords.

But this would almost certainly delay the plebiscite until after the next election.

"Obviously, how there is long-term reform of the Lords is closely linked to reform of the Commons, because it is about the Houses of Parliament and the system of government," he said. "Of course the Lords is linked to the Commons."

WHY DOWNING STREET WILL NEVER BE HOME



Tony Blair and his wife Cherie considered remaining at their home in Islington (above) after last year's general election. They now live in the top half of Gordon Brown's official residence at No 11 Downing Street. "We miss having our own home," he admitted. "If it hadn't been so difficult to do, if it hadn't caused such disruption to the neighbours, we would have preferred to stay in our own home."

- Interview page 3

Rushdie steps out as a free man



Salman Rushdie leaving his press conference in Islington, north London, yesterday - still escorted by Special Branch Tom Pilton

(if this is what you call freedom)

YESTERDAY WAS the first day in nearly 10 years that Salman Rushdie did not face a state-sponsored death threat. A great day and we, the press, wanted the details. What were your first thoughts, Salman, on your first day of freedom? His great hooded eyes gave nothing away. "Well," he said, "when I woke up this morning, I thought, it's only half past five."

OK, then, what about his second thought? But the novelist, normally so eloquent, was not doing the schmalz thing. His second thought, he said, was to switch on the television to make sure that the deal between Iran and Britain had not fallen through. He did and it had not and so

were so furry that they may have been alive. But where was Salman? The temperature rose to Death Valley levels, as did our expectations. He arrived, beaming, in a taupe suit and salmon shirt. He spoke first, and sadly, of the dead and injured (his Japanese translator, for instance) and others hurt in demonstrations. The campaign had not been about one man's safety, he said, but about something much greater - our freedoms of speech and of the imagination. The resolution gave him "serious and grave" satisfaction. Everyone, from Special Branch to the Government to his family, were heaped with thanks.

He did not regret publishing *The Satanic Verses*. "There is not a chance in hell of the book being withdrawn. We have not fought this battle to give in at the last moment." He would not apologise, nor was he asking for an apology. "I'm saying this is a moment for a fresh start. We just need

to turn the page, we don't have to scratch the scab. What I'm saying is end of story, time for another story." Not so fast, though, because now Rushdie knows how this story ends he says he will finally write about it. "It's a hot story and most of you don't know it!" First, he was looking forward to getting back to the "simple thing" that is normality. For good measure, he thanked us, the media, for our support. But we wanted something else: a piece of schmalz for the road. What will you be doing on your first weekend of freedom, Salman? "Talking to journalists," he said. Can this be normal?

INSIDE

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DECLARED ILLEGITIMATE
TRIED FOR TREASON
CROWNED QUEEN
AGED 3
AGED 21
AGED 25
ELIZABETH
CATE BLANCHETT
GEOFFREY RUSH
CHRISTOPHER ECCLESTON
JOSEPH FIENNES
RICHARD ATTENBOROUGH
STARTS IN THE WEST END OCTOBER 2
AND ACROSS THE COUNTRY FROM OCTOBER 23

HERETIC
LOVER
TRAITOR
ASSASSIN

'There is no alternative. New Labour is the solution, not the problem'

BY DONALD MACINTYRE
AND ANDREW GRICE

IT IS a perfect, mellow, September morning. The sun is slowly dispersing the haze over the Chilterns. In the garden, the Prime Minister, in a blue and white striped shirt, is drinking tea from a Capital Radio mug while coffee is poured for his visitors in the best Chequers china.

He gives us a lightning tour of this light, airy, largely 18th-century and quintessentially English country house, first presented to Lloyd George for his use in 1921. We see the Hawtrey room, where Churchill made some of his most famous wartime broadcasts. We sneak a look at a Constable landscape, a Reynolds portrait.

He points out Cromwell's musketeer and Napoleon's table in the loog library on the first floor, musty from the smell of old books, its curved mullioned windows looking out on the rolling Buckinghamshire countryside. Of the two official homes it is the one Tony Blair likes, a place where he can think, a refuge for his young family from the official hustle and unhome-like formality of living "over the shop" in Downing Street. The five-acre goal on the ample lawn testifies to the regular weekend presence of the Blair children.

But he isn't here to relax today. He's here to write a speech which is perhaps the most difficult of his premiership. We are right in the heart, just now, of what Mr Blair has called the "post-euphoria, pre-delivery phase" of his first term.

The latest poll shows the Government still at gravity-defying levels of popularity despite growing public pessimism about the economy. But the party is edgy: about job losses, about the charges of cronyism in the Drapergate affair brought in its wake, about the pain which may attend the difficult welfare reforms ahead. Mr Blair expects to see at least two - and perhaps more - left-wingers elected on to the National Executive this week, which will be widely read as a rebuke for the leadership from the party members.

He knows the importance of the speech in Blackpool. It will no doubt seek to reconnect the leader with his party, the head with the body. But here on the sunlit terrace at Chequers, what is absolutely clear is that he has not the slightest intention of compromising with his critics on the substance of what New Labour is about.

He positively relishes, it seems, the opportunity the widespread anxieties give him to spell out his economic message: "Domestically, the single most important thing is to produce long-term stability. The long term was over woo by a faint heart, I'm afraid."

First, he says, "a sense of perspective would be a good thing. Our economy is still growing. We must be careful not to talk ourselves into a worse position than any objective assessment merits."

Yes you cannot remain immune from a world 40 per cent of which is in recession. But overall, Mr Blair points out, unemployment has fallen by 300,000 while employment grew by 400,000. Yes, the siren calls to change economic course, will "test the mettle" of the Government as they did previous governments. The difference is that this one won't change course as they did.

"We are doing something very different from previous Labour governments or even previous Conservative governments. In the first two years, we have imposed the toughest fiscal tightening for decades, given independence to the Bank of England and established a new set of fiscal rules."

The course being urged on him by William Hague was that which had led, under the Tories from the late Eighties to 15 per cent interest rates, high inflation and record bankruptcies and repossessions.

Because the economic circumstances had been different people hadn't believed Mr Blair when he had said at the time that Bank of England independence was "a very bold move". He went on: "There is a political risk for the Government, but there is no doubt in my mind that we have done the right thing."

"The absolute precondition of a successful modern economy is monetary and fiscal discipline. If that is absent, you won't get a successful modern economy because the world is interlinked. If events of the

past few weeks have taught us anything about the world economy, it is its interdependence."

You can pore over individual decisions of the Bank but that isn't the point. Long-term credibility is the point. "I do believe that interest rates have had to rise much less than they would have done had politicians still been in charge of the show because of the greater credibility of an independent system..."

"It is not a one-club policy - that is a myth. It can take account of the wider economy. The essence of the policy is to say there is no trade-off between inflation, growth and jobs."

All this, perhaps, is predictable. But when you ask Mr Blair about the growing debate about whether Labour will sooner or later have to put up income taxes he is much less predictable. He is unimpressed by an argument which is audible in wide swathes of the party.

On the contrary he still regards - economy permitting - continuing reduction of taxes as a "key" objective. Luminaries like Frank Field, the former social services minister, and Lord Plant - neither exactly left-wingers - are entitled to have this debate, but my own gut feeling is that there is a long-term trend away from higher personal tax rates.

Instead Mr Blair is excited about what private finance can do for better public services. The private finance initiative he drew up with Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, has produced the biggest ever hospital building programme. "It is unpopular in some quarters, the unions don't like it, but that is definitely the way the world is going."

The message for the party next week will be equally uncompromising - that the Government won the biggest single party majority since 1906 because it was New Labour; and that New Labour is the "solution" not the problem. We have made a very good start, we are fulfilling our manifesto pledges. We will have to hold steady over the next year or so, but we are in this for the long term."

There are plenty of potential problems ahead: the economy, and what he calls "some very tough reforms" on pensions, invalidity benefit and legal aid. "The one thing we can argue is that the country voted for New Labour... and that is what we are going to hold to."

According to Mr Blair, successes for the likes of Liz Davies in the NEC ballot will be partly because they presented themselves as "critical supporters of the Government who were basically supportive. I doubt Liz Davies mentioned she was a member of Labour Briefing [the hard left group]."

Overall, he insists, he detects no desire to return to the ultra-leftism of the past. "They have certainly run on the basis they are merely grassroots supporters of the Government who want to represent ordinary party members. Let's see. If they are elected and they play a different game, they would



'When Roy [Hattersley] was in the Labour government, they were off to the International Monetary Fund and cutting public spending'

find the party not very pleased. "I totally understand if members decide they want some critics of the Government [on the NEC] as well as people who are part of the Government. But there is no ideological alternative I can see being put forward to New Labour."

Nor does he think there could be credible alternative on the neo-Croslandite old right of the party any more than on the left. Didn't Roy Hattersley and his soulmates, we asked, have a point that after years of battling to save the party, they now didn't recognise it? "They have got to understand it was never enough to make the Labour Party sane. We have to

make it modern, with answers for the problems the world is posing for us," he said.

"The greatest single danger for the Labour Party of the 1990s is believing that once you excised the cancer of ultra-leftism, the task was done. In fact, all the ultra-leftism did was disguise a deeper malaise, which is the fundamental necessity for modernising social democracy. It's not simply riding social democracy or democratic socialism from the encrustment of ultra-leftism. When Roy was in the Labour Government, they were off to the International Monetary Fund and cutting public spending. I don't criticise them for it; they were dealing with a very difficult situation."

"Each generation will find its way of renewing the basic principles. I am not saying the Croslandites are wrong, they were probably right for their time. Atlee's government was right for its time. At some later time, someone will come along and say the way the Blair government tried to do this was too old-fashioned. That's life, that's change."

That is why other countries are so interested in his "third way". Mr Blair is frustrated that the British press is more sceptical than the media in other countries; the conference he at-

tempted with President Bill Clinton on Monday was reported prominently in 40 countries round the world.

"I believe in the politics of community. That is what I am about. That is why I am not a Conservative. But you have to apply those values to the problems of the modern world."

Yet hadn't Sir Edward Heath said Mr Blair was well to the right of him? "How do you define left?" he asks. "More tax, more spend, union power? What does he mean?" He recalled that Sir Edward was the architect of a failed attempt to reform the industrial relations laws in the 1970s. "If you define radicalism as 1980s corpo-

ratism, I don't think that is where the world is any more." His task, he said, "was about renewing social democracy." It is about recognising that social democracy has got to be a force for radical change.

As with the Croslandites so with - especially but not exclusively - middle-class critics of his long flirtation with Rupert Murdoch. Complaints of Mr Murdoch's influence on the Government were "just complete rubbish," Mr Blair said. He treats Mr Murdoch no differently to any other media proprietor. He "rejoiced" at Labour's support from business: "I was 20 years in the Labour Party when you couldn't get a businessman near it."

"The chattering classes are fine for the Labour Party but up to a point. They were really pretty reluctant about all the changes we made to the Labour Party, but were prepared to tolerate them in the interests of winning the election. That was never my view. That is why I have never been a partaker of the chattering classes. My view is that the changes in the Labour Party were not just necessary to win the election but were right in principle. Yes, we do have problems keeping them on board. That is why a lot of them peel off. But they are not the bedrock of the Labour Party - that is a lot of ordinary folk who are not part of the chattering classes, who pocket everything that they do like and then moan about the 10 things they don't like."

What then of constitutional reform? Here, Mr Blair rebuts firmly one criticism - that he stumbled into Scottish Home Rule, and in doing so has now unleashed the genie of separatism. Quite the opposite says the Prime Minister. As in the very different circumstances of Northern Ireland - where to have disappointed the pent-up pre-election expectations of what a Labour government would mean might have unleashed catastrophe - so Scotland needed a way forward.

"If you offer people a choice between the status quo and separatism, there is a risk real they would choose separatism. If you offer a modern forward-looking and sensible alternative in which Scotland and England grow stronger together in a stronger UK, in my view in the end people will go for it."

The Scottish National Party, he noted, had had a bad conference. It had not set out its policies and had barely mentioned the one which truly defined it: independence "would be a disaster for jobs, business, industry and trade."

The defining moment for the nationalists had been when it had "wiped all its policies off the Internet." The

repeated mantra that he is "not persuaded" of the case for change. He will not say that the PR referendum will, or will not be in this Parliament, which will not delight those Liberal Democrats who fear it won't be. Instead the game is waiting for Lord Jenkins' report.

But he gives a strong hint that the Commons PR could be

other criticism is that he has "fiddled with the constitution when we should be doing other things." Not at all, he says; they all have to do with modernising and strengthening the UK.

So where does that leave us on Commons electoral reform? Here Mr Blair is notably cautious, though it is striking that he does not, this time, use the

repeated mantra that he is "not persuaded" of the case for change. He will not say that the PR referendum will, or will not be in this Parliament, which will not delight those Liberal Democrats who fear it won't be. Instead the game is waiting for Lord Jenkins' report.

But he gives a strong hint that the Commons PR could be tied together with second stage Lords reform in the same referendum. Obviously, he said, the long term reform of the Lords is closely linked to reform of the Commons, because it is about the Houses of Parliament and the system of government.

This doesn't seem like a Prime Minister, on the point of



Tony Blair in the garden at Chequers, the Prime Minister's country home, where he is working on a speech for Labour's conference in Blackpool next week David Rose

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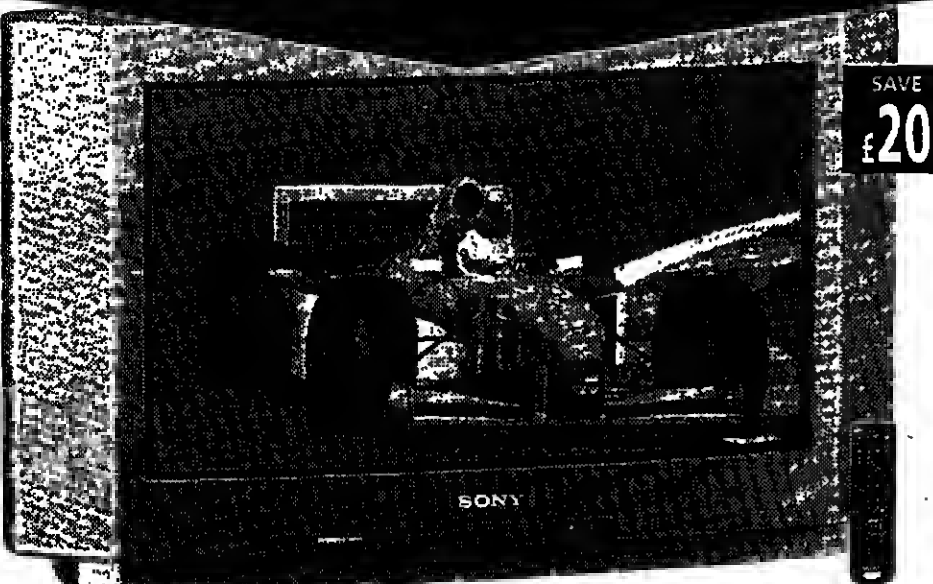
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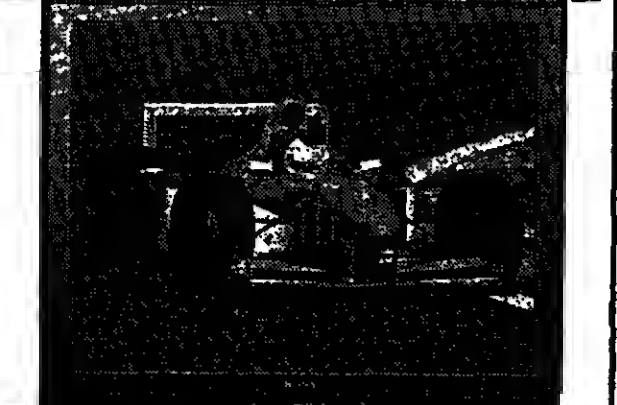
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Fashion Week: Dapper Peter Mandelson pays tribute to a sector which has become the UK's sixth biggest industry

Italians go big on Britain

WEARING A dark grey Richard James suit and a pale blue Hilditch and Key shirt, the clean-cut, square-jawed Peter Mandelson, Trade and Industry Secretary, stepped forward at London Fashion Week yesterday and congratulated Britain's designers.

The dapper Mr Mandelson did a reasonable job of blending with the perfectly-coiffed hordes in the Natural History Museum, but his presence was also an indication of the growing importance of Britain's all-conquering designers to the British economy.

The clothing industry employs 213,000 people, and produces £7.9bn worth of goods every year, making it the country's sixth biggest manufacturer.

Though there have been some recent, well-publicised failures — like Oswald Boateng's closure after the cancellation of £1.5m in orders from recession-struck Japan — clever marketing and branding by more exclusive labels has seen designer exports grow to 70 per cent of the market.

"It's very much an export-led business," said John Wilson, director of the British Fashion Council.

"The wider clothing industry has been hit by the high value of the pound and the economic problems in the Far East.

"But within the designer sector, the problems are much less severe. We're talking about brands, and the brand images are so strong that they are less price-sensitive," said Mr Wilson.

Despite the global economic downturn, a record number of overseas buyers have registered for this Fashion Week.

Although that doesn't necessarily mean there will be a record amount of sales, it

By ANNE HANLEY
in Rome

bodes well for the 210 houses in the design sector, which rely on the export market for 70 per cent of their production.

The importers of our fashions are Japan, US, Germany and, in the ultimate compliment to Paul, Katharine, Ted and their peers, Italy, the land of Gucci, Prada, Armani.

Japan's crash may have claimed the business of Mr Boateng, one of Saville Row's most original tailors, but Paul Smith, Vivienne Westwood and Alexander McQueen are all thriving in Tokyo.

"They are cult brands and people will continue to buy them, there isn't really any competition," said one person close to one of the designers.

Showing a flair for international economics is almost as important as a flair for hemlines and colours; the latest target of the export drive is America, seen as a relatively unexploited market.

Saks Fifth Avenue, the New York equivalent of Harvey Nichols, held a British Designers' Week earlier this month. "They love Brits over there, and they can sell their stuff at a premium," said someone involved with the project. "On the East Coast it's seen as exclusive, even though the American market is quite conservative."

Mr Wilson says that like the best investors, design houses are hedging, with an increased interest in the British market and diversifying activities here.

Some of the design houses are making diffusion (secondary) brand clothes for High Street retailers; others are starting businesses consulting retailers like Marks & Spencer about their new ranges.



The creations of the newcomer Sean McGowan were paraded before a packed ballroom at the Dorchester Hotel

Peter Macdormid

Debut pair make impact

By MELANIE RICEY

TWO NEWCOMERS attracted the cream of the world's fashion press at London Fashion Week yesterday and Sean McGowan, 27, was surely the hottest ticket.

Guests scrambled to fit into a downstairs ballroom at the Dorchester Hotel to watch his show while more established designers held their shows (somewhat depleted of an audience) simultaneously.

This was a case of the hype out-doing the clothes. McGowan is two things: an accomplished designer of evening wear and a master at self-promotion who admits the show was a "gamble".

The show itself was a let-down. Twenty-five dresses, all designed with skinny versions of Ivana Trump in mind, do not raise eyebrows in London anymore, even though no shock tactic was left untried. Dresses that did not cover the bottom, shaggy wigs, and exaggerated peaked shoulders were London last year when creativity and ideas were prized over clothes people can actually wear.

That isn't to say that McGowan didn't design clothes that people will want, such as a blue Duchesse satin "swimsuit dress" with Adidas-inspired bold stripes — perfect for the cocktail hour.

The second hot ticket of the day was Robert Cary-Williams, who graduated in June from Central Saint Martins. His show was inspired — like his graduation collection — by military uniforms.

Cary-Williams, 34, was a soldier who left the Army to become a fashion designer, and his vision is post-apocalyptic. Tattered robes, deconstructed flying suits, moulded leather jackets, and canvas smocks formed the back-bone of the collection.

Commercial success will be a long-time coming for these two.

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1988-1998: THE RUSHDIE YEARS

THE SATANIC VERSES IS PUBLISHED

In September 1988, *The Satanic Verses* is published by Viking/Penguin. The title comes from the verses that the Prophet Mohamed removed from the Koran for being "inspired by the devil". Muslims are offended by passages discussing the sexuality of the Prophet; the book is banned in India. It wins the prestigious Whitbread prize.



BOOK BURNINGS AND RIOTS

In Bradford, more than 1,000 Muslims take to the streets burning copies of the hardback and effigies of Rushdie. By January 1989, WH Smith's withdraws the book for a month. Protest demonstrations in Pakistan on 12 February lead to five deaths while a mob attacks the British embassy in Tehran.



THE FATWA IS ANNOUNCED

On 14 February 1989, the Ayatollah Khomeini announces a fatwa, calling on Muslims to carry out a death sentence on the writer. Rushdie immediately cancels a promotional tour in America and goes into hiding. An Iranian cleric offers a \$1 million bounty to any foreigner and nearly three times as much to any Iranian willing to kill Rushdie.



RUSHDIE MAKES CONCESSIONS

Rushdie is placed under 24-hour protection from Special Branch and has been constantly on the move. The cost of the operation has been estimated at up to £1 million a year. Rushdie has contributed. As many as 20 Iranians have been expelled from Britain under suspicion of being involved in plots to carry out the fatwa.



RUSHDIE MAKES CONCESSIONS

Rushdie apologises for causing distress, although in 1990 he defends the book. In a 7,000-word essay, he attempts conciliation with Iran, donating £5,000 to the Iran earthquake appeal and announcing a willingness to "embrace Islam". But in December 1990, the Ayatollah reiterates the fatwa.



THE DOMESTIC STRAIN

In August 1989, Marianne Wiggins, Rushdie's second wife, abandons their life in hiding and attacks him as self-obsessed and vain. Last August, Rushdie marries Elizabeth West, his partner of three years, with Zafar, Rushdie's son from his first marriage to Arts Council worker Clarissa Luard, as best man. He and Elizabeth have a young son, Milan.



RUSHDIE BREAKS COVER

In December 1990, Rushdie attends a book signing in north London and broadcasts live on Radio 4's *Start the Week*. After 18 months of invisibility, he visits the US, Denmark, Spain, Germany, Sweden, Canada, Ireland and France. In June 1994, he is criticised for appearing on the satirical *Have I Got News*. But the outings continue.



THE FATWA'S VICTIMS

Apparently unable to strike at Rushdie himself, his publishers and translators become a target instead. In July 1991, his Japanese translator, Hitoshi Igarashi (right) is stabbed to death and the Italian translator, attacked by a hit squad demanding Rushdie's address. Two years later, in Oslo, Rushdie's Norwegian publisher, is shot and severely wounded.



THE FATWA'S VICTIMS

The International Committee for the Defence of Salman Rushdie with branches around the world is spearheaded in Britain by free speech campaigner Frances D'Souza. Ms D'Souza meets Iranian diplomats in London in 1992 and the committee lobbies the Foreign Office regularly. Other campaigners include writers Andrew Motion and Blake Morrison (above).



FREEDOM AT LAST

The first sign of progress is in February when Rushdie meets Robin Cook and is allowed to give his first press conference in the ornate surroundings of the Foreign Office. Months of delicate talks follow. "It looks like it's all over," Rushdie says on Thursday. Yesterday he faces the world, free at last.



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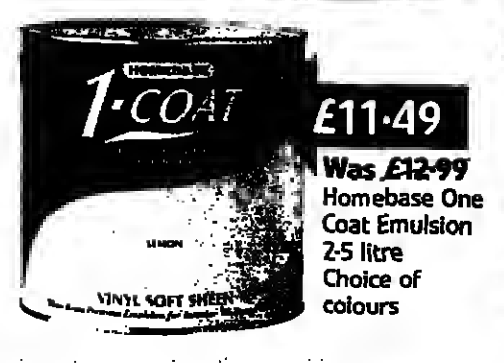
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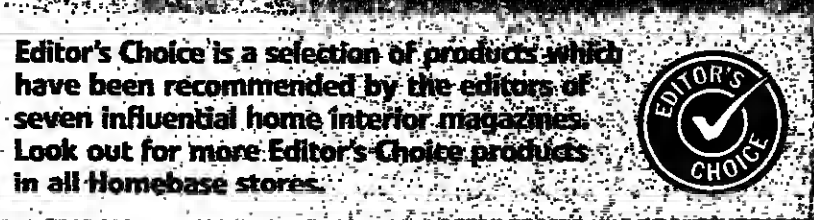
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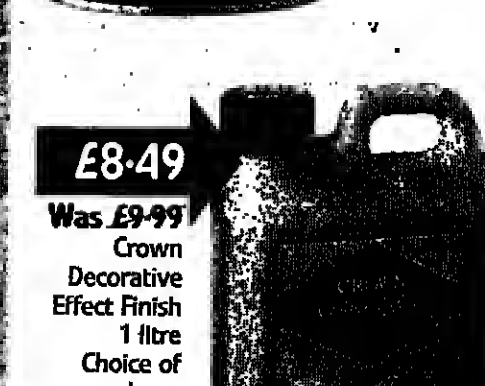


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Rushdie thaw is boost to oil firms

BRITAIN HOPES to capitalise on the new economic and diplomatic opportunities created by the end of the impasse over the writer Salman Rushdie when Derek Fatchett, Foreign Office minister, visits Tehran in the next few weeks.

The resolution of an affair which has soured ties in the nine years since the late Ayatollah Khomeini pronounced his fatwa - an exhortation to murder - against Mr Rushdie was, in the words of Mr Fatchett yesterday, the product not of "cloak-and-dagger" secret meetings, but of "old fashioned conventional diplomacy" as both sides took advantage of last year's election of the moderate President Mohammad Khatami.

Two gestures within the past month set the stage for the agreement in New York - Iran's public expression of condolence for the victims of the Omagh bombing, and the condemnation by Britain of the murder of nine Iranian diplomats by Taliban militiamen in Afghanistan. Both went well beyond the norms of the frosty relations between the two countries, signalling a shared desire to bury the hatchet. A formal upgrade of ties to the ambassadorial level is now likely even before a Fatchett visit.

British officials acknowledge Tehran's move is no guarantee of Mr Rushdie's safety, and that the \$2.5m (£1.5m) price on his head still stands, even though the Iranian government has disassociated itself from from the bounty. But the threat had been greatly reduced, said Mr Fatchett, who even dared hope Tehran would tip off the British authorities if it got wind of any plans by fanatics to assassinate the writer.

So, with the air cleared, the two countries can address themselves to a host of pressing issues. Britain's priority is

BY RUPERT CORNWELL

to ensure Iran sticks to its non-proliferation pledges and does not acquire nuclear or chemical weapons.

Another aim is to enlist Iran's help in stemming the flow of drugs from neighbouring Afghanistan, where more than 90 per cent of the heroin on Britain's streets is believed to originate. It is no co-incidence, officials point out, that the price of heroin in Iran has risen steeply following its massive troop deployments near the Afghan border, which have severed many trafficking routes.

Meanwhile the important Iranian market beckons for British firms, especially in the oil and gas field. Britain enjoys a large surplus (£360m in 1997), but trade should now grow substantially, especially if Iran ends its suspected discrimination against British suppliers.

But the longer term repercussions of the thaw could be most significant. After Britain's deal on Rushdie, the US stands even more isolated in its sanctions against Tehran, which are now the main - if not the sole obstacle - in the way of a pipeline across Iran carrying the oil and gas from the Caspian and Central Asia to its deep water port at Bandar Abbas.

For the oil industry that proposal is vastly cheaper, much simpler and preferable to the alternative of a pipeline to either Russia or Turkey's Mediterranean coast. If the US relents, Iran's economy would receive a massive fillip.

Finally, there is Iraq, with whom Iran fought an eight-year war in the Eighties. Iran's rapprochement with Britain, which, along with the US, is Saddam Hussein's most outspoken foe among the allies which liberated Kuwait, can only alarm the Iraqi dictator and increase his sense of isolation.

Fatwa alive, say British Muslims

THE MUSLIM community in Great Britain was split yesterday between those still angered by Salman Rushdie's book *The Satanic Verses* and those who want to put the damaging affair behind them.

Anjem Choudary, secretary general of the Society of Muslim Lawyers, said Rushdie was still in danger. "Anyone who insults Islam is subject to the death penalty," he said. "There are a lot of people here who would not like to see him walking the streets. Even if he apologises and repents he will still

BY LOUISE JURY

be subject to the death penalty." Faisal Bodi, of the *Q-news* Muslim newspaper, said Muslims reaction was uniform: "Irrespective of what goes on in Tehran, the offence still continues in the form of the book."

But Sahib Mustaqim Bleher, general secretary of the Islamic Party of Great Britain, said many Muslims wanted to put the damaging row behind them. "Nobody likes him, but things have moved on since then," he said.

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A question of class: As a survey finds a majority of Britons believe they're working class, we put the matter to the test

FAY WELDON, author, considers herself 'middle, middle class'. 'I think the whole consideration of class has gone full circle. The term working class used to be a cultural phenomenon. It related to people who did not depend on money and were not aspirational but had unions and other groups lobbying for them because they were seen as being in need of help. Once people had an education they became middle class. Now I think it gets to something else. Now I think it has more to do with what television programmes you watch. There is a whole group of people out there who do not watch the BBC never mind Channel 4. I think the people who always watch ITV would describe themselves as working class.'



MARQUESS OF BATH, aristocrat, considers himself working and upper class depending on who he is talking to: 'For some time I have not seen the value of relating class to the manner in which one was brought up or born. I think that sort of thing is on the way out. I think the idea of a meritocracy will replace the idea of an upper class. If people ask if I descend from a long line of people who have been in the top bracket, however that is defined, I cannot deny it. But I work and I would also consider myself a member of the working class even though I realise how misleading that might be.'



KEN JACKSON, leader of the Amalgamated Engineers and Electricians Union, has recently campaigned for more working-class MPs: 'Working class refers to ordinary people - the sort our union represents. I am talking about people like engineers, fitters and plumbers. People who actually get their hands dirty and work on the shop floor, rather than someone like a barrister. One of the ways the working class is identified is by the pressure its members have to work under - suddenly being told they have no option but to work a night shift, people who have no bargaining power. I do not think that parliament is particularly representative - I would like to see more boiler suits and less lounge suits.'



MARK ANTHONY, a construction site foreman, describes himself as a working man: 'I think people might like to think that the meaning of working class has changed over the past 20 years but I suspect that it has not. It is still an 'us and them' situation and there are still some people who look down on you. People still pigeon-hole you. I would say anyone who has a manual job rather than working in an office is working class. I am a working man but I would not want my two sons to grow up and do what I do. There are so few opportunities - you are put in a certain category and it is very hard to get out of it. The only chance we have is winning the lottery.'



DAVE TROTT, award-winning creative director with advertising agency Walsh Trotter, describes himself as a member of the traditional working class: 'There are many different working classes. The guy I work with is from the stereotypical working class you see in the media - all dodgy Arthur Daley types. I am from a different working class - all my family are sergeants, either in the army, marines or police. That is the working class that built the Empire. I think now that the working class has split. Many are the underclass. Then you have those who want better for their children and work themselves up into the lower working class.'



So which class do you look down on?

CAN YOU keep up? Now it transpires that most of us are working class. According to an ICM poll for the *Today* programme on Radio 4 yesterday more than half the population is keen on proclaiming its proletarian roots. Some 55 per cent reckon they are working class compared with 41 per cent who think of themselves as middle class - with a meagre one per cent laying claim to membership of the upper classes.

But hang on. It doesn't seem that long since we were being told we were all middle class. Indeed, it was on the very same BBC programme only a while back that the Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott was stoutly maintaining that, de-

BY PAUL VALLELY

spite his background as an able-bodied seaman and stalwart trade unionist, he was self-evidently now a member of the bourgeoisie, on the basis, presumably, of his hefty ministerial salary and Jaguar.

Around the same time Prince Edward declared that the British class system was dead. It was "codswallop" to suggest otherwise.

Government statisticians seemed to agree. They charted a change in demographic profiles which revealed that, in the 1970s only a third of the population fell into the category of middle class. Today it is more than half. They are now reclassifying us all from the six

grades used since 1921 - A, B, C1 and C2, D and E - and are preparing 17 new categories to be in operation by the next census in 2001. (Nurses are up and plumbers are down. Lawyers and doctors are on a par with teachers and police. All of which should produce a good dose of controversy when the statistics are eventually published.)

So what are we to make of the apparent contradiction between all these steadily emerging trends and the new poll finding that most people think of themselves as working class?

Class is a difficult concept. Once it resided in blood and family and expressed itself in things like the school you went



to or the social circles you move in. But over the years it became diluted by the amount you were worth, the property

you lived in, the job you did. Now government statisticians will be adding in other indicators - your perks, pension, pri-

vate healthcare and level of job security.

Which, perhaps, explains why in yesterday's poll only 45 per cent of the population felt that the Blair government was committed to all classes equally. A greater number (47 per cent) believed it was more committed to one social class - and of those only 27 per cent saw that commitment as being to Labour's traditional constituency, the working class. Some 71 per cent felt Tony Blair was set on favouring the middle and upper classes.

For all John Major's hopes for a classless society the signs are that class in Britain is as much of an issue as it was in the days when the writer Nancy Mitford produced her "U and

non-U" guide to socially acceptable language.

It is just that class becomes ever more subtle. The nexus of characteristics by which it is measured grows each time the undesirable come within striking distance of mastering the last set of criteria. Accent, language, education, manners and taste continue to count.

Those with wads of dosh can never buy armour against what Lord Annan, the former BBC director general, called the invincible British defect - snobbery. It reaches to all levels of society, as when Lord Charles called the Duchess of York "vulgar, vulgar, vulgar" or The Daily Telegraph leader on her divorce, which described her as "irredeemably unroyal".

Class is not contingent, you see, it is integral, and those who do not possess the right kind of it are literally beyond redemption. By contrast there is nothing so slippery about the notion of the working class. It speaks of a dying era in which there resided in the common people notions of community, roots, and pre-relativist values. It is a world which a middle-class, plagued by over-work or unemployment, enforced mobility and contract culture, can only yearn for. It is a romantic illusion, of course, but it enables us to be middle class in our pockets and working class in our hearts. How very post-modern.

Leading article, Review, page 3

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DINNER, TEA OR SUPPER?

Is your house called:

1. Toad Hall?
2. Dungenbanger?
3. Selvedon Manor?

Do you refer to your evening meal as:

1. "My dinner"?
2. "Me tea"?
3. "Msupper"?

You are watching Les

Dennis's Family Fortunes

on Saturday evening. The

compere asks for Six

Things You'd Find in a

Kitchen. Top of your list is:

1. An asparagus kettle?
2. A bottle of HP sauce?
3. An under-house parlour-maid?

You have to attend to the

call of nature. Do you ask

your host:

1. "Where's the loo?"
2. "Have you got an indoor toilet?"
3. "Point me to the thunder-box, old boy?"

To the best of your

knowledge, Vm is:

1. The Christian name of that bleak German film auteur whose retrospective you attended at the ICA last year?
2. A proprietary cleaning agent?
3. What your housemaster told you to be full of on the sports field?

At a party, somebody tells

you they live on an estate.

Do you reply:

1. "What - you mean like Brookside?"
2. "So do I, but the council are promising me a proper house after the kid's born?"
3. "Well, well. Employ a lot of beaters, do you?"

Is your idea of an attractive

woman:

1. That little mix from The Coms who sings "What Do I Have To Do To Make You Love Me?" on Top of The Pops and needs a damn good spanking?
2. Kathy Bates?
3. A Gloucester old spot sow?

Is your idea of an attractive

man:

1. Michael J Fox?
2. Boycie in Only Fools and Horses?
3. General Sir Michael Rose?

Tell us the clothes you're

most comfortable in. Are

they:

1. A simple pair of River Island denims, with a simple black Oswald Boateng shirt and some simple Philip Sweeney suede loafers?
2. Ben Shermans and Doc Martens (both from Barnard's)?
3. Your grandfather's waders?

At a friend's house, you

notice a strange woman in

Your new job offers a salary

"plus LVs". Do you think

they can be:

1. Low-voltage batteries?
2. Luncheon vouchers?
3. Lots of Volvos?

You ring a wrong number,

and a female voice says,

"This is the Duchess of

Buccleuch", do you

assume she is:

1. Showing off?
2. A cousin on your mother's side?
3. A pub?

Is your idea of an attractive

woman:

1. That little mix from The Coms who sings "What Do I Have To Do To Make You Love Me?" on Top of The Pops and needs a damn good spanking?
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2. Ben Shermans and Doc Martens (both from Barnard's)?
3. Your grandfather's waders?

At a friend's house, you

notice a strange woman in

the corner of the kitchen.

Do you assume she is:

1. The cocaine dealer?
2. The social worker?
3. The nanny?

Is your pet dog:

1. A Labrador called Gordon?
2. A pit bull called Vinny?
3. An Irish wolfhound called Graine?

Is your ideal holiday:

1. Two weeks in a rented farmhouse in Umbria with some, you know, really close friends dropping by to try the feticcine all'alfredo and the pudding marsele?
2. Three days in Southend with a rickied Visa card, a hot Mondo, a dodgy spray job, a wrecked mobile, a take-away prawn vindaloo and a bird called Tiffany with a permanent sniff and a bun in the oven?
3. A year exploring one's grounds?

ANSWERS

Mostly ones: I'm sorry but

you are irretrievably middle-

class. A lifetime of shopping

at Ikea, drinking Argentinian

chardonnay, patronising

workmen and saying "For my

sins..." stretches before you.

Mostly twos: Congratulations.

As you suspected, you're as

common as muck. Go out this

evening, blow your whole

months salary in the Whelk

and Bastard, and crash the

Reliant against a handy

wheelie-bin.

Mostly threes: You upper-

class git. What are you doing

reading a questionnaire?

National standards for 'failing' social services

NATIONAL standards and

priorities for social services

will form part of a radical

overhaul of social care, according to

government plans leaked yesterday.

A draft copy of the White

Paper to be published in November

will set out how social services

were "seriously failing to

provide the support that people

should expect", particularly in

the care of the most vulnerable

in society. Lack of co-ordination,

inconsistency between authori-

ties and inefficiencies mean

many authorities' perfor-

mances left "a lot to be desired".

In the draft, which was

leaked to the BBC, it says that

new independent regional

authorities would regulate

nursing and residential care for

children and adults across the

country as well as the agencies

that deliver care to people's

homes. The boards will include

representatives of those who

BY GLENDA COOPER

Social Affairs Correspondent

well as local authorities and

health authorities.

New national standards will

include guidance on what coun-

cils should charge for services

such as home help - one report

found some people paid only 4

per cent of a council's spending

on the service, while users in

other areas paid 28 per cent -

and there would be reforms of

inspection arrangements.

A General Social Care Council

will regulate training of the

1 million workers in social care

and set up registers of profes-

sional social workers and chil-

dren's home staff. This week's

highly critical report by the So-

cial Services Inspectorate into

children's care found a "sorry

picture" of lax staff vetting, fail-

ure to run police checks on new

staff and no systematic way of

seeing staff followed rules.

A spokesman for the De-

partment of Health said yester-

day that the Government

was proposing tougher regula-

tion of social care, but the exact

details would be published in

due course.

Social services leaders wel-

comed the Government's

moves towards national stan-

dards but denied that social

work had failed.

Ray Taylor, president of the

Association of Directors of So-

cial Services, said the reported

proposals showed the Govern-

ment wanted to raise standards.

He conceded that things had

gone wrong in some cases. "But

we've also made a considerable

success of community care re-

Never again, says first man to swim the Atlantic

BY JOHN LICHFIELD
in Paris
AND CLARE GARNER

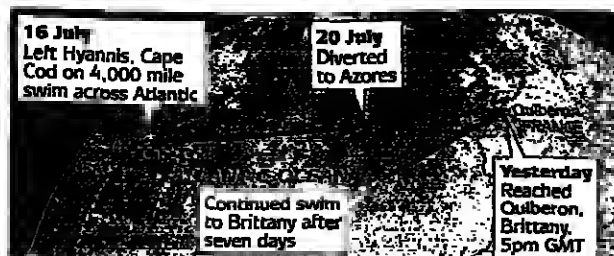
AFTER OVERCOMING sharks, internal demons and an arm injury, a 31-year-old French-born American yesterday became the first man to "swim" the North Atlantic.

Ben Lecomte staggered ashore near Quiberon in Brittany after swimming 3,736 miles from Cape Cod in Massachusetts over the past 10 weeks, and vowed: "Never again." His spokeswoman, Colleen Turner, who travelled some of the way with Mr Lecomte on his support boat, was among a large group of friends who greeted him.

"It is very, very exciting but Ben is a little overwhelmed," she said. "He said he is very happy to feel sand between his toes. But his first words were 'never again'."

Mr Lecomte, an airline marketing representative, arrived at just after 3.30pm British time after a final 25-mile swim.

His swim included a 500-mile detour in the Azores, after



an emotional crisis in late August in which he lost the will to continue. His claim to have set a new long-distance swimming record may now be open to question. He spent seven days ashore in the Azores and he passed some of the Atlantic crossing, between swimming sessions, drifting on currents in his support boat.

The naturalised American born in Paris undertook the swim as a tribute to his father, who died of cancer in 1991. He expects to raise £50,000 for his chosen charity, the British-based Association for International Cancer Research.

Surviving on a diet of jam, Nutella, pasta and tuna, Mr Lecomte swam for six or eight hours each day, in two-hour

sessions. He wore a giant "monofin" flippers on both legs and was protected from sharks by a force-field of electro-magnetic signals emitted from his support yacht, the Polaris.

Earlier this week, Mr Lecomte said that although France was getting closer, he was "so tired" and still had to wear two wetsuits because of the cold water. He has been rising at 6am and swimming an average of four miles an hour.

Ma Turner said: "He's been through a lot. At one point, he was followed by a great white shark. He didn't know exactly how big it was but he could see it moving back and forth about 30 feet below him. He said: 'It's a lot bigger than I am' and that was 30 feet away."



Overcoming an attack of nerves – and, potentially, sharks – Ben Lecomte heads for Brittany at the end of his transatlantic swim

Donors for Tory poll revealed

TWO SENIOR Conservative treasurers have agreed to underwrite the £300,000 cost of the party's ballot on Europe amid concern among members about the state of the party's finances.

Sir Graham Kirkham, founder of the DFS furniture chain, and Michael Ashcroft, who sold out of the ADT security firm for £154m last year, are looking for donors to pay for the cost.

Sir Archie Norman, the party's chief executive, announced plans to cut almost 50 jobs in July, taking staffing levels to 188 from 235. There would be 22 redundancies, he said, after the party ran up a £4m overdraft during last year's general election.

However, a number of wealthy friends of the Tories have already said that they do not intend to help with the ballot devised by William Hague, the party leader.

The party says the donors will not include Paul Sykes, the Eurosceptic who has pledged £40m to fight the European single currency. Nor will the media moguls Conrad Black or Rupert Murdoch help, despite their strong views on the subject.

Although the party has denied that a proposal for the cost of the ballot to come from its central funds was ever put forward, senior figures have said they expressed their antagonism to the idea.

A party spokesman said its ruling board had agreed "on the nod" with the plan for the two treasurers to find the money. "We knew that the board were very concerned about the financial position of the party and we had set a very tight budget which we all agreed to stick to," he said. The two treasurers had

BY FRANK ABRAMS
Westminster Correspondent

agreed to find the money from other sources. However, several of those who might have been expected to help have ruled out the idea.

A spokesman for Business for Sterling, a group of wealthy figures opposing the single currency, said it would not pay for the ballot. Nor would Sir Stanley Kalms, the chairman of Dixons, who is linked with the group.

One figure rumoured to be putting money into the ballot, the property tycoon David Hart, denied that he was doing so. "No chance. Not a cat's chance in hell. I am not a member, and although I think the ballot is a good idea I would not dream of helping," he said.

An assistant to Lord Harris, the carpet millionaire who has funded the party in the past, said he no longer had anything to do with the party.

The ballot has irritated pro-Europeans. Michael Welsh, chief executive of the Action Centre for Europe, said that Mr Hague should spell out exactly who was paying for it.

"Regional chairman are iffy about the whole hushness because they feel at a time when agents are being sacked it didn't do much for morale on the ground," Mr Welsh said.

Ballot papers went out to all members of the party earlier this week, and the result is expected to be announced just before its conference starts in 10 days' time.

The result is likely to be a resounding "yes" vote for Mr Hague's policy of staying out of the European single currency for the duration of at least this Parliament and the next.

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Widow, 86, dies in knife attack

AN ELDERLY widow has been found stabbed to death in her home. Irene Swanwick, 86, died from multiple wounds after a "frenzied" attack, police said yesterday.

Neighbours in West Bridgford, Nottingham, raised the alarm on Thursday afternoon after Mrs Swanwick failed to keep a lunchtime appointment.

Police said they had ruled out a sexual motive, but the frail woman died in a "frenzied" attack. Detective Superintendent Colin Warburton, who is leading the murder inquiry, said: "This is a savage attack on a defenceless, elderly woman and

we need to catch whoever is responsible." He appealed for anyone who was in the Priory Road area between Wednesday evening and Thursday afternoon to come forward.

A neighbour discovered the body of the woman – who they said spent her spare time helping friends – yesterday afternoon in the large detached house where she lived alone in the affluent West Bridgford suburb of Nottingham.

Her neighbour Chris Theobald said his wife Judith raised the alarm at just after 2pm yesterday, when she called round and discovered that the house had been ransacked.

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Salmond tells Scots to seize liberty

ALEX SALMOND urged Scots yesterday to touch the "horizon of national freedom" that was now so close. The key to success in next May's elections to the first Scottish Parliament in 300 years lay in taking a positive approach to Home Rule and articulating how much more Scots could do with independence, the Scottish National Party leader told his party's annual conference.

Mr Salmond believes the "gradualist" route to independence – first demonstrating competence in a devolved administration – is the least likely to alarm voters and business.

The delicacy of the task was underlined yesterday in an opinion poll that showed Labour re-

By STEPHEN GOODWIN
Scotland Correspondent

gaining a significant lead over the nationalists. During the summer Labour has mounted an increasingly vitriolic attack on SNP "separatism".

The ICM poll gave Labour 57 seats in the Edinburgh parliament, the SNP 46 seats, Tories 17 and the Liberal Democrats nine seats – hardening the prospect of a Labour-Lib Dem coalition. While Mr Salmond was scathing about "London Labour" and mocked the dazed remnants of the Tory party, he made no mention of the Liberal Democrats.

Mr Salmond told delegates at the Eden Court Theatre in In-



Alex Salmond gets a standing ovation after his speech to the SNP conference yesterday. Jeff Mitchell/Reuters

verness that the election would be the first real contest in Scottish politics for a generation – "no more divine right for Labour to rule in Scotland".

"First of all we want to make the parliament work for Scotland – both in the narrow sense of being successful in doing what

it can do, but also in the broader sense of, by that success, aspiring to do much more. Our approach is entirely positive."

He said one of the very best things about the road to independence was the opportunity it offered for a grown-up relationship with the English. Under

Labour and the Tories, Scotland had been a "lobbying culture", rushing down to London whenever anything went wrong. "When it rains in Scotland, some people blame the English."

The SNP did not blame the English for the state of Scotland. "At each ... election we

have the ability to vote ourselves into independence. And if we choose not to do that, then that is my fault for not arguing the case well enough, our fault as a party for not campaigning hard enough, our fault as a country for not having the guts or the gumption for freedom."

Labour faces election fight, warns Wigley

WELSH NATIONALISTS have been urged to match the Scottish National Party's success against Labour.

Dafydd Wigley, president of Plaid Cymru, yesterday warned that the Labour Party can expect a tough battle for control of the new Welsh Assembly.

"The time has come to take over from Labour and to prepare ourselves for the responsibility of governing Wales," he told his party's annual conference in Cardiff.

With support for Plaid Cymru standing at a record high of 24 per cent in the opinion polls, Mr Wigley claimed it was not an impossible task to become the largest party when the 60-seat assembly is elected next May.

The challenge, he said, was to turn Plaid Cymru into the new Wales party which "every-one in our country can identify with". Mr Wigley criticised the Government for creating an over-valued pound and undermining Welsh manufacturing, agriculture and tourism.

"The swing from Labour to Plaid Cymru reflects the dis-

By BRENDAN BERRY

may of the ordinary people of Wales towards the reactionary and damaging policies of the Tony Blair Government," he said.

In a message aimed at winning over voters in Labour's traditional heartland in the South Wales valleys, Mr Wigley claimed the track record of Labour councillors was nothing short of "civic disaster".

The Wales Labour Party would be unable to serve Wales in the assembly because it was still controlled by the party leadership in London, he said. "Wales cannot afford to have its assembly run by those who were, at best, half-hearted about its existence."

"It must be determined primarily by the needs of Wales and by those who give their first allegiance to Wales," he said.

Although his party continue to press for a fully-fledged Parliament in Scotland, Mr Wigley insisted that Plaid Cymru would be committed to making the assembly work in its present form.

index

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Sept 26 1998

Take a simple story and watch it grow

LAST MONDAY morning, a television researcher rang to ask if I would like to take part in a discussion about President Clinton's videotape evidence which was scheduled for late that night. As I know no more about Bill Clinton than the average reader of a British newspaper - have no extra dimension of information or opinion - my answer came easily enough.

There are good, if usually self-serving, reasons to appear on television chat shows and documentaries: to advertise yourself, to advertise your product, to get something off your chest, to put a point of view that might otherwise not be put, to earn a little money. But none of them apart from the last seemed to apply here, and in any case I would rather have a tooth pulled than get into a television studio (I will always remember Edwina Currie, as the interviewer/host of some pointless studio-audience show in Nottingham, putting her hand on my knee during the commercial break, half-way through the interview, and whispering: "Don't be so defensive!").

That night I watched the programme, which had a presenter and three guests in the studio and more people fed in from Washington. I guessed that the slot I might have filled was occupied by a man who either did not have much to say, or had and was never given much chance to say it. Nothing suggested that he had studied the affair longer or harder and knew more about it than me, you or the Everyman now known as Worcester Woman, formerly the Man on the Clapham Omnibus.

He did not make a fool of himself. He was perfectly pleasant. It was just difficult to know why he was there - why, in fact, any of them in the studio were there. If the tape was important - and everybody agreed that it was - then why not simply play an edited version of the tape for a couple of hours and let the audience judge Mr Clinton's performance for itself?

The answer is fear, not, at least in this case, the fear that unmediated information will provoke riots in the streets or that the public are too stupid to understand it; but the fear among television executives

NOTEBOOK



IAN JACK

that the public will be bored, that they will switch off, that the ratings will go down, and then the advertising revenue, and then perhaps the station itself. And so we have this excitable thing called "good television", where the camera never rests on one face for more than a minute, where (the producers have their fingers crossed) some kind of argument will break out briefly among the guests, and where (if things get too dull in the studio) the satellite link can beam us in another opinion from elsewhere. As a medium of enlightenment it is almost entirely useless. The great paradox of this "information age" is that information, as opposed to opinion, theory and speculation, is so very hard to come by.

JOAN DIDION writes very well about the Clinton-Lewinsky affair in next week's issue of the *New York Review of Books*. I do not mean the affair itself. That can be easily expressed: man has sex with office junior half his age, man lies about it. Didion's piece is disguised as a review of Kenneth Starr's report (referral to the United States House of Representatives pursuant to Title 28, United States Code, price \$595), but is actually a most brilliant study of the media's role in inflating what began, on 18 January this year, as an unimportant story on the Internet about Ms Lewinsky's allegations.

The word "role" here is misleading, as though human behaviour (politics, say) and what the media mainstream chooses to select as important about it can somehow still be separated; in fact, the two have been thoroughly conflated - ask any spin doctor. As Didion writes: "The current crisis in American politics began as and remains a situation in which a handful of people, each of whom believed that he or she had something to gain (a book contract, a scoop, a sinecure as a network 'analyst', contested ground in the culture wars, or, in the case of Starr, the justification of his failure to get either of the Clintons



Beryl Bainbridge, whose 'Master George' brings her into the 1998 Booker Prize 'narrative' Richard Gardner/Ret

oo Whitewater), managed to harness the phenomenon and ride it."

Crucial to this or any other large media phenomenon is "the story", or what these days we more grandly call "the narrative". Many events are too sudden, shapeless or complex to provide one. Popular stories need simplicity - sex in the of-

fice, Clinton v Starr - and the time to develop. A story has to go somewhere. If the Princess of Wales had been buried on the day she died, the Diana phenomenon would have been smaller and briefer: the week between her death and her funeral allowed plot and character to grow. There have been many larger

disasters at sea than the *Titanic*, but for the purposes of entertainment they tend, neglectfully, to be too sudden; one reason for the success of the *Titanic* (as a story) is the predicament faced and endured by the people on board in the two hours the ship took to sink. As to the Clinton story, it would not of course exist with-

out Mr Starr's obsessive investigation, but in the presentation of the results the independent prosecutor seems to have obeyed old advice from E. M. Forster (What does the novel do? "Yes - oh dear, yes - the novel tells a story").

His report, or at least the narrative sections of it, were written by an aspiring novelist, Stephen Bates. It is, as Didion points out, not so much a careful legal document as "Monica's Story" with Monica as the unreliable narrator: "I left [Clinton] that day sort of emotionally stunned. I just knew he was in love with me."

Does the Clinton story matter then? Obviously: the President could still go. But it has been made to matter, and not it would seem by the American population at large, that tirelessly invoked generality "the American people" (less than 50 per cent of whom - or of those eligible - bothered to vote in the last presidential election).

Media economics and media needs have played the vital part. Didion again: "The cost of producing a television show on which [a moderator] referees an argument between an unpaid former federal prosecutor and an unpaid 'legal scholar' is significantly lower than that of producing conventional programming. The explosion of 'news comment' programming occasioned by this fact necessitates, if viewers are to be kept from tuning out, non-stop breaking stories on which the stakes can be raised hourly. The Gulf War made CNN, but it was the trial of O J Simpson that taught the entire broadcast industry how to perfect the pushing of the stakes."

THANKS TO the rapid advances in media technology, compelling, easily understood stories such as Clinton and Simpson (and Louise Woodward, although nobody in that case bothered much with the evidence) become global upstarts, blighting everything in their shade. But the techniques of media story-telling also serve humbler and sometimes more benign causes. I am thinking of the annual Booker Prize, the shortlist for which has just been announced. In terms of cash, there are many bigger literary prizes

than the Booker (£20,000 to the winner), but none that manages the story so well. First, the long list, which officially does not exist, is carefully leaked. Then comes the shortlist of six; enter the odds from Ladbrokes and William Hill. Then come the arguments among the judges; more leaking. And then the climax: some punditry and (with luck) rudeness from the studio, followed by a cut to the dinner and the sight of one triumphant writer rising from his or her chair, while another five try to be brave over their coffee.

A cruel business, but nobody has found a better way of making literary novels more interesting - other than, possibly, reading them. Who deserves to win this year? I have no opinion, not having read all six books. Who will win? The bookies' early favourite is Ian McEwan. I would put my house (on second thoughts, your house) on Beryl Bainbridge.

FINALLY, I thought about the after-life of the big story. How long does it take for its comic potential to be realised? In some cases the jokes are immediate: Clinton, Simpson. In other cases, usually those that involve death, jokes remain taboo for much longer. I remember my father's distaste at a *Goon Show* which featured the Tay Bridge disaster, which in his childhood (although the disaster had occurred long before) remained in Scotland a matter for sadness.

Last week, I think I spotted something of a breakthrough in an episode of BBC2's *Rab C Nesbitt*, in which the good people of Govan were weeping at the death in a car crash of a famous Govan country-and-western chanteuse, much to the disgust of Rab C. After the funeral, his wife wonders if things can ever be the same again: the public grieving about this woman they didn't know had given Govan such a "new sense of community".

It was very funny - a genuine satire on a year-old event, dangerously and pleasantly radical about the temporary worshippers of Her Holiness. It could not have been made in London - here it would have become a story (BBC Comedy Mocks Diana Grief) in itself.

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Humble Kohl pleads for one more chance

ON THE penultimate leg of his 60-stop election tour of Germany, Helmut Kohl looks fresher than when he began. Standing in front of 20,000 cheering supporters in Munich's picturesque Marienplatz, he produces his best grandfatherly smile, even when made to wait for an hour while his Bavarian hosts monopolise the microphone.

The Chancellor must have patience, because he is here to plead for one more chance, and knows his followers have doubts. So he is at his humblest, approaching the Bavarian audience with the submissive comportment of a prodigal son. "We have made mistakes," he says apologetically. "Even Helmut Kohl has."

His hosts, the Bavarian Prime Minister, Edmund Stoiber, and the Chairman of the Christian Social Union, Theo Waigel, have never disputed that. Apart from numerous policy disagreements, the Bavarians have been scathing about Mr Kohl's campaign from

BY IMRE KARACS
in Munich

the very beginning. If he has any chance at all now, they remind him, it is because of their helping hand.

Two weeks ago, Mr Kohl's Christian Democratic Union campaign bus was trundling along a blind alley. Now, thanks to his Bavarian allies' magnificent victory in elections of their own, conservatives have fresh hope for the elections on Sunday.

"A shaft of light from the south has dispersed the gloom over Germany," is how Mr Stoiber modestly describes the effect of his triumph against the Social Democrats in elections to the regional assembly. Gerhard Schröder had paid four visits to Munich, Mr Waigel chimes in, and his party had lost four points in the city. "One per cent for every trip," Mr Waigel guffaws, to the crowd's evident delight.

So much for the famous "Schröder effect", but maybe

the "Bavarian effect" is also wearing off. At first, it propelled Mr Kohl to within shouting distance of his challenger. But he stopped catching up in the past few days, and the gap may even be widening again. Hobe is beginning to ebb away.

The Independent learnt that an unpublished survey completed yesterday by one of Germany's largest polling organisations put Mr Schröder three points ahead. Surprisingly, the Chancellor's junior coalition partners, the Free Democrats, seemed in danger of tripping over parliament's 5-per cent hurdle.

Such a scenario would herald the end of Mr Kohl's 16-year reign, though the polls could be wrong. "Germany has come to a fork in the road and has a decision to make," Kohl tells the crowd in Munich. "We can only hope that the compass isn't broken."

The needle on the compass has been spinning crazily over the last months, but never once has it settled in Mr Kohl's

direction. Ever since Mr Schröder won his party's nomination in the spring, the Social Democrats have been ahead. Not one poll has predicted a Kohl victory.

Sunday's outcome could be messy, but in all the likeliest scenarios, Mr Schröder's figure moves into focus, and Mr Kohl's frame fades into obscurity. Perhaps the two biggest parties will be forced into an "elephant's wedding", without the self-styled elephant himself. The talk is of a "grand coalition", and the electoral arithmetic almost dictates that. But Mr Kohl, who likes being depicted as a pachyderm, will not take part in one - that much he has already said.

If Mr Schröder wins and becomes Chancellor, in whatever party constellation, Germany will be in for profound changes. Relations with Europe, particularly Britain, would be altered without recognition. As Mr Schröder told *The Independent* in January, he would endeavour to elevate London to

the same level of importance Paris now enjoys in the European decision-making process.

"My idea of Europe is that the Franco-German axis, which has always been important, should be turned into a German-French-British triangle," he said. "If you are to get into Europe - and you must - then you need what Tony Blair has demanded for Britain: a leading role - a place in the leadership. And that can only work in partnership with Germany and France. I think that is the right way ahead, especially since I believe the British are on a more correct economic and political path than the French Socialists - or at least the majority of French Socialists." The French, understandably, are rooting for Chancellor Kohl.

Which combination will emerge on Sunday night, not even the best crystal ball gazers can foretell. The numbers are simply too close to call.

Leading article, Review, page 3



Democratic Socialist party supporters wind up campaigning in Berlin EPA

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Mahathir vents fury at Cook's polite inquiry

BY RICHARD LLOYD PARRY
in Kuala Lumpur

"I DON'T care for his views, I don't know what his views are," said the man in the leather armchair. "Of course in Malaysia, because we are an Asian country, we don't have fair trials, so you can report that all over the world; that we don't have fair trials. Fair trials can [only] be had in European countries."

The speaker was Mahathir Mohamad, the embattled Prime Minister. The object of his sarcasm was the British Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook. So began the latest diplomatic tiff in one of the more uneasy of the relationships left over from the remains of the British Empire.

It started on Thursday, when Mr Cook met the Malaysian Foreign Minister, Abdullah Badawi, on the fringes of the United Nations in New York. Among the subjects discussed was the fate of the Malaysian opposition leader, Anwar Ibrahim, and on the face of it, Mr Cook's remarks appeared fairly mild. According to a British official, the Foreign Secretary expressed concern about Mr Anwar, the sacked Deputy Prime Minister, who has been locked up since Sunday when he led a big demonstration against Mr Mahathir. He said it was important that due processes of law were seen to be followed, and asked that Mr Anwar be granted access to his lawyers.

Mr Abdullah appears to have taken Mr Cook's remarks calmly enough, but for Dr Mahathir,

touchy at the best of times about patronising remarks from the former colonial power, it was a red rag to a bull. At the latest in a series of increasingly emotional press conferences, he raged against Mr Cook, Mr Anwar and the "lies" being propagated against him by the foreign media.

"Why don't you tell the truth once in a while?" he demanded. "Even in Britain they detain people under the Prevention of Terrorism Act or something like that, recently. Osama bin Laden's men, seven or eight of them, were detained under the Prevention of Terrorism Act... it seems this is a universal law in many countries." He also accused Mr Cook of hypocrisy for not mentioning the matter last Monday, when they met during the Queen's state visit. "When he was here it is strange that he never asked me about anything," Dr Mahathir observed. "He could have had it from the so-called horse's mouth."

The US State Department has also expressed concern about Malaysia's Internal Security Act, which allows indefinite detention without charge or access to lawyers. The Australian Prime Minister, John Howard, has accused Dr Mahathir of drifting towards authoritarianism. Profile, Review, page 5

Refugee death minister quits

BY KATHERINE BUTLER
in Brussels

BELGIUM'S government was in crisis yesterday after the interior minister tendered his resignation in response to a wave of public protests about a young Nigerian immigrant who died when police tried to forcibly deport her.

Louis Tobback, who is also Belgium's deputy prime minister, said he was stepping down after new information about the incident came to light. He admitted police had "made a mistake", which may have led to the death of Semra Adamu, a 20-year-old woman who sought asylum in Belgium to avoid an arranged marriage with a 65-year-old polygamist in her own country.

Ms Adamu lapsed into a coma on Tuesday night while struggling with police on board a Sabena Airlines plane bound for Togo. The police used a pillow to silence her screams. Outraged members of the public took to the streets after her death was announced, calling for Mr Tobback to resign and chanting "Close the [detention] camps, open the borders".

Further protests are expected today when Ms Adamu's body is taken to Brussels cathedral for a funeral service. Her application for asylum had been

championed by leading public figures, but Mr Tobback refused to allow her to stay.

Yesterday the police union condemned the policy requiring officers to enforce expulsion orders, while border police at Brussels airport staged their own protest.

A veteran politician who returned to the cabinet only five months ago after his predecessor resigned over the scandal surrounding the escape of paedophile Marc Dutroux, Mr Tobback was urged to stay on by the Prime Minister, Jean Luc Dehaene. But Mr Tobback said the tragedy marked the "darkest day of my political career" and insisted he had to accept responsibility for the actions of the geodarmie.

He had earlier defended the much-criticised Belgian policy of expelling illegal immigrants by force and the use of pillows to subdue recalcitrant individuals.

Two police officers have been charged in connection with Ms Adamu's death and it has emerged that one of them had been suspended earlier this year for excessive brutality during expulsions.



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'You're on your own,' police warn, as Florida prepares to greet Georges



A solitary cyclist braves tropical storm-strength winds to make his way along a deserted road in Miami Beach yesterday

AFTER DEVASTATING tracts of the Caribbean and northern Cuba, Hurricane Georges hit United States territory shortly before midday yesterday, lashing the south-westernmost islands of the Florida Keys chain with 120mph winds and torrential rain.

The hurricane knocked out power and water supplies from the resort town of Key West at the south-western tip of the chain to the town of Marathon in the Middle Keys.

There was extensive flooding, cutting US Route 1, the dual carriageway that links the islands and the mainland for a distance of more than 100 miles, in several places. One reporter said the Overseas Highway, as the road is known, had become the "Underseas Highway". The islands are only 7ft above sea level. Trees were uprooted and light damage to beach bars and sheds was already visible. Police suspended road patrols as the storm reached its height. Roads and streets were deserted.

Southern Florida, meanwhile, including the southern and coastal areas of the Miami

BY MARY DEJEVSKY
in Miami

conurbation, and the small towns of Homestead and Florida City that were almost erased by Hurricane Andrew six years ago, were spared the brunt of the hurricane.

After a night of fierce squalls, with 75mph winds and tempestuous seas from the fringe of the hurricane, people awoke to a yellow-grey dawn with the rain sheeting down and water coursing down city streets like rivers.

But the hurricane warning for Miami was downgraded to a tropical storm warning and wind speeds were not expected to increase. Flights, suspended from all airports in the region, including Miami International, on Wednesday evening, remained grounded, although a limited service was expected to resume before the end of the day.

There were widespread power cuts in southern Miami, however, leaving 80,000 people without electricity, and the demand for shelters as the force of the hurricane made itself felt

was greater than expected. New shelters, most of them in weather-protected school buildings, were opening up as late as midnight on Thursday as the storm strengthened. People without, or reluctant to use, their own transport faced the greatest problems, as phone lines for transport requests were overloaded.

The chief worry in the Keys was for the estimated 35,000 residents who had ignored the mandatory evacuation order, despite repeated warnings through Thursday that they would be left with no emergency services. "If they decide to stay, they're on their own. There's nothing we can do for them if they stay," said the Keys emergency spokesman.

Police and rescue teams were taking shelter, with reporters and the few tourists who had chosen to stay in the powerless, waterless, La Concha Hilton in Key West, waiting for the worst of the hurricane to pass.

Police blocked plans by a number of bars in Key West to host hurricane parties, citing the emergency curfew, which also banned sales of alcohol.

The ban did not prevent a clutch of private beach gatherings, however, until the weather deteriorated too far.

While most of those who stayed in the Keys appeared philosophical and well-prepared for the onslaught, the county authorities and police expressed concern about what they saw as a degree of complacency among Keys-dwellers. They noted that evacuation orders had been well observed in the regions of southern Florida devastated by Hurricane Andrew six years ago, which narrowly missed the Keys. Even in Miami Beach, where evacuation was voluntary, a majority appeared to have left before the storm hit.

They may have been encouraged by the first squall, which suddenly swept southern Miami with scant warning on Thursday evening, turning a clear blue dusk in a matter of minutes to a lowering mass of yellow-grey menace that yielded a furious downpour.

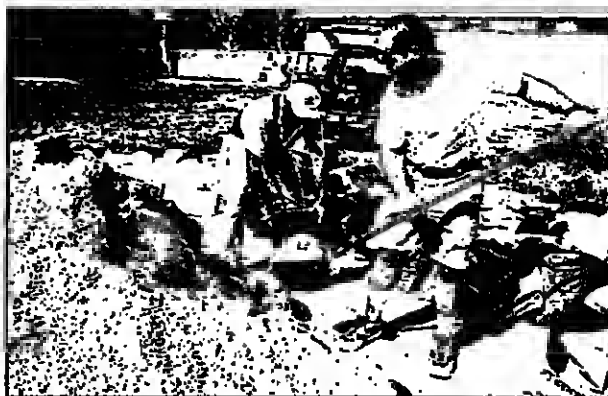
Florida television and radio stations ran broadcasts throughout the night, giving the latest information about the hurricane's

progress, punctuated with warnings to stay indoors or seek shelter. "Shelters of last resort" were established in Miami and the Keys, public halls with weather protection, but no staff or supplies, for those who had left it too late to seek shelter elsewhere. Television and radio stations linked their broadcasts, so those deprived of power could stay in touch.

From Fort Lauderdale in the north, through Miami Beach, down to Key West, the television networks also paraded their latest star reporters: the young, keen storm-chasers, seen braving the elements alone in standard uniforms of bright yellow waterproofs (but safe refuge and a supportive camera team close by). At times, the paradox shone through as a self-righteous storm-chaser rebuked a defiant loner for walking his dog or just coming out to "see what it's like". A hurricane may be no place for the likes of you and me, but the reporters were on a high from tamping the wrath of the gods. "There's a puddle here, that's got white caps on it," exuded one. "Think about that."



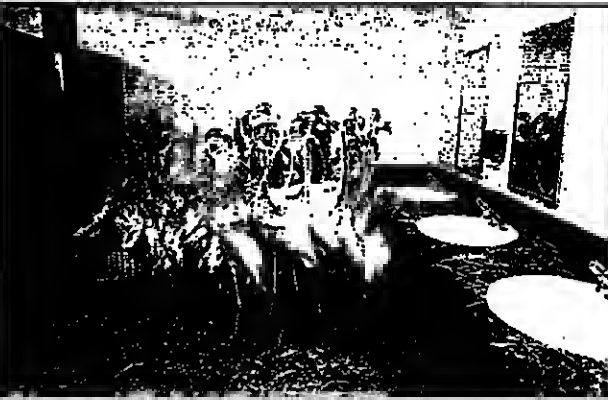
Gary Dowdell sleeps in a school hall in Marathon, Florida



Hotel workers fill sandbags to prepare for the storm



A Cuban man points to a tree uprooted by the hurricane



Flamingos shelter in the lavatories at Miami's MetroZoo



300 dead, thousands homeless on islands

BY MARCUS TANNER

RESCUE WORKERS in the Dominican Republic pulled more bodies from the mud, water and rubble left behind yesterday by Hurricane Georges. At least 307 people died in the storm that ravaged the Caribbean.

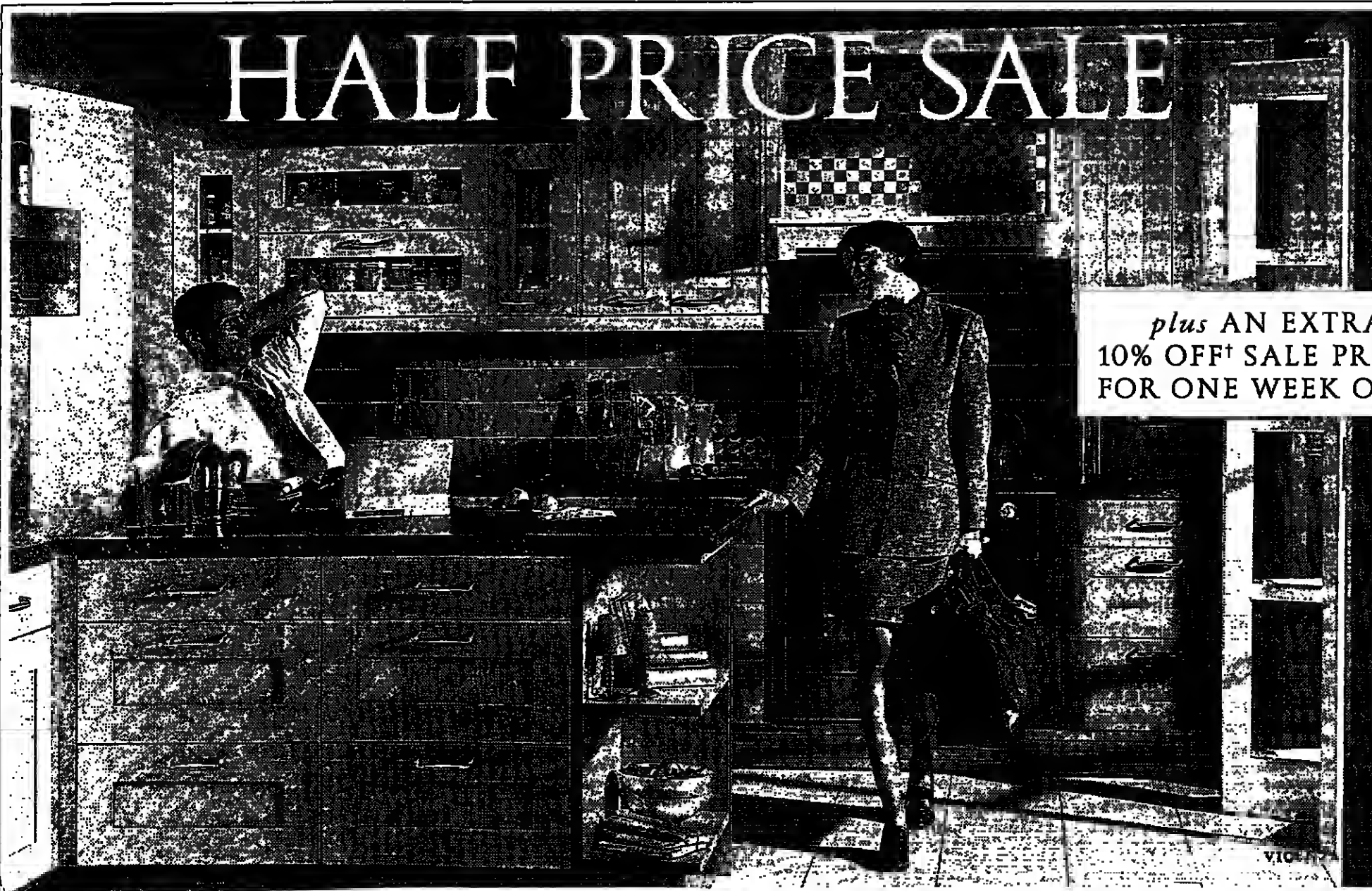
American and French aid arrived yesterday in the Dominican Republic, including search and rescue teams. They were trying to reach the hard-hit Juan de la Maguana area, 120 miles west of the capital, Santo Domingo, where 76 bodies were recovered on Thursday.

About 100,000 people were left homeless in the Dominican Republic alone, while the authorities said 70 per cent of bridges were damaged and 90 per cent of banana and other plantations destroyed.

The death toll was lower elsewhere in the Caribbean, though most islands suffered massive damage to their infrastructure. In Haiti, 27 deaths were reported and dozens of homes were destroyed. In Cuba, two deaths were reported and 200,000 people had to be evacuated. On Puerto Rico at least three people were killed and 28,000 people were evacuated. The authorities estimated the bill for damages at \$2bn.

Three were killed on St Kitts and Nevis, and two in Antigua. On the US mainland, in Florida, thousands of British holidaymakers were bracing themselves for the expected onslaught. However, UK holiday companies are still chartering passengers to Miami, although tour operators are warning holidaymakers to stay away from the brunt of the storm, in the south of the state.

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The growing enigma of Florence Rey

WITH HER sharp, elfin face and faded denim jacket, she looks like a 14-year-old on trial for shoplifting a CD.

For long periods, Florence Rey's features freeze in puzzlement, as if she cannot recognise the events being described in the Paris Cour d'Assises; as if she cannot quite recall the other Florence Rey, who is on trial for murdering three policemen and a taxi driver, as well as 12 attempted murders, hostage-taking and robbery with violence.

All of this happened in the space of a crazy, murderous 25 minutes on the evening of 4 October, 1994: an insane interlude in what had previously been - and what has since become again in prison - a studious, warm-hearted, self-effacing life. In prison, she writes poetry and plays; she is a model inmate; she helps to calm the wilder spirits among the other girls.

Florence Rey is now 23. An unflattering mugshot of her, issued by the police after her arrest, briefly turned her into a kind of folk-heroine among the disaffected element of French youth. She appeared on T-shirts and posters. She was one half of the "Boonie and Clyde des banlieues" (suburbs), a sallow, empty-eyed, courageous 19-year-old nihilist, who took on the "flics" and romantically lost.

Her boyfriend Audry Maupin, 23, died in her arms after leading her on a scatter-brained raid on a police car-pound in eastern Paris, which ended in a muddled and violent car chase into the Bois de Vincennes. (The two anarchist bandits had originally intended to go home by Metro.)

Their murderous escapade has been connected by some with Oliver Stone's 1994 movie *Natural Born*

BY JOHN LICHFIELD
in Paris

Killers, which tells the story of a pair of young psychopaths in the United States. A poster for the movie was found on the wall of the derelict house in which Maupin and Rey were squatting in Nanterre, west of the city. However, their room was also full of "autonomist" (anarchist) and anti-police tracts, written by Maupin. There is no evidence that either of them saw Stone's movie before the fatal night.

Three policemen were shot dead at point-blank range. An African taxi-driver, who refused to co-operate and deliberately crashed his hijacked car into a police vehicle, was executed with a shot in the neck. All were murdered by Audry Maupin. No one suggests that Florence killed anyone but she admits to firing several shots - 13 in all, says the prosecution - one of which hit a policeman who was already dying. She is charged with being a full participant in the murders.

Since her trial began last week, Florence and her lawyer, Henri Lederer, have tried to paint a picture of a confused, emotionally immature young woman, who wanted to prove herself to her domineering, fantasist boyfriend. After meeting at university and sharing a love of rock-climbing, they dropped out of college together and lived an increasingly miserable existence, without water, electricity or money.

"By the end, I hadn't much I could say," she told the court. "I thought Audry had lost interest in me. I didn't know what to do. I was depressed. I just needed to show him that I was still there... Mostly, I just didn't want to wait alone for him to come back."

On several occasions, Rey has



A gendarme escorting Florence Rey, 23, in the Paris courtroom where she faces charges of murder and attempted murder AP

apologised, in tears, to the court and to the relatives of the four people who died. "I just want to say to the families of the victims that I am sorry," she said. "It was a terrible chain of events. I understand their

grief. I know what it means to lose a friend, a father, a mother... I just wish it hadn't happened."

But, little by little, this picture of Florence Rey - not an anarchist killer but an impressionable and troubled

young woman, who joined the raid on the spur of the moment - has been shaken apart in court. It was Florence who bought the hooded anoraks and one of the hunting rifles used by the pair. Witnesses have de-

scribed her as an active, cool participant in the robbery gone wrong. A second motorist, taken hostage after the death of the taxi driver, said she pointed a gun in his ribs and said: "If you stop, I'll plug you." The

motorist, Jackie Bensimmon, also claimed that she urged Maupin to shoot a pursuing police motorcyclist. "Go on, go on, plug him, what are you waiting for?" he reported her as saying. (Waking from her court reverie at this point, Florence Rey denied saying any such thing). According to Mr Bensimmon, when the young woman saw that the police had blocked the road ahead, she asked him, calmly: "Can you do a hand-brake turn, like in the movies?"

One remaining mystery in the affair is the role played by the second accused, Abdelhakim Dekar, known as Toumi. He is charged with being the lookout in the original raid. He denies (in the face of all the facts) ever having met Maupin and Rey and claims to be an undercover agent for the Algerian government.

Stéphane Violet, a radical filmmaker who briefly befriended the couple, told the court that he believed it was Dekar's taunting that pushed Audry Maupin over the edge, from theoretical nihilism to an attack on the police pound.

And Florence Rey? "She rarely had anything to say. She was like a butterfly... It was as if she wanted to be part of the conversation... but couldn't really contribute anything."

Anarchist heroine, confused teenager, cool killer, repentant and intelligent young woman? The more the trial goes on, far from uncovering the real Florence, the enigma grows.

Her mother, Anne Rey, clutching her daughter's excellent school reports, described a good-hearted, religious girl, who had never been in trouble until she met Maupin. "It's the story of a first love affair which went all wrong," she told the court.

The trial is expected to end next week. If convicted of murder, Florence Rey faces a life sentence.

Clinton's critics on the back foot

THE WHITE HOUSE campaign to defend Bill Clinton has scored a series of successes, leaving his critics wrong-footed at the end of a dramatic week.

The President has staged a remarkable recovery in public esteem as discontent increasingly focuses on his Congressional accusers and not on him. Mr Clinton's counter-attack against charges from the independent counsel, Kenneth Starr, has moved into overdrive, with the President's lawyers also discussing a settlement of the Paula Jones sexual harassment suit, which began the whole sorry affair.

Opinion polls released yesterday show that the President's approval rating has again risen, reaching 67 per cent, according to a New York Times/CBS News poll.

Perceptions of his personal image have also rebounded, with 45 per cent of the public now having a favourable image, up from 39 per cent 10 days ago. A clear majority say they disapprove of the way in which the Republican-dominated Judiciary Committee has handled the matter. Even a majority of Republicans believe that the video of the President's testimony should not have been released.

Mr Clinton's lawyers are discussing a settlement with Paula Jones, the former Arkansas employee who brought charges

BY ANDREW MARSHALL
in Washington

of sexual harassment against Mr Clinton. It was this case - subsequently dismissed by a judge - that sparked the Monica Lewinsky affair, since most of the accusations in the Starr report centre on perjury and obstruction of justice in this case.

Ms Jones had appealed, and a conclusion to this matter will go a long way towards easing the President's problems. The settlement centres on a payment of \$1m (\$600,000) to Ms Jones, but no apology or acceptance of blame in any way by the President.

The Republicans have apparently scored an own goal by releasing the video of the President's testimony, but the White House is also running a highly effective campaign to change the public perception of events. It has managed to manoeuvre Republicans into the public's sights as the villains - in particular Newt Gingrich, the unpopular Speaker of the House.

Hillary Clinton has signalled that she will be taking on a new high-profile role in the forthcoming Congressional elections, effectively replacing her husband on the hustings where she has been eagerly embraced by Democratic candidates.

The Lewinsky affair has also had the effect of mobilising right-wing Republicans, and they are likely to vote in

strength in the Congressional elections next month.

But there is growing evidence that more moderate Republicans are increasingly wary. Among the most likely voters, the Republicans have a solid majority of 53 per cent to 41 per cent. But even here, there is scant consolation for Mr Clinton's opponents: a USA Today/CNN poll shows the Democrats edging into the lead.

The President, yesterday went on the offensive again, charging the Republicans with negligence and partisan obsession for leaving key spending bills unpassed. "A few moments ago I signed stop-gap legislation to keep the government open and running at the start of the new fiscal year," he told reporters.

"By failing to meet its most basic governing responsibilities, the Republican majority in Congress has its priorities wrong: partisanship over progress, politics over people," said Mr Clinton, in what is becoming a familiar refrain.

Republicans were defensive on television talk shows yesterday, scrambling to regain control of a process that seems to be slipping away from them. The more right-wing among them have every intention of pressing on, because their supporters are keen and because they believe they will mop up votes. More moderate ones have their doubts.

Missile triggers US tiff

BY ANDREW MARSHALL

A MISSILE exported from Britain to the US has been impounded after American authorities found it was not demilitarised, triggering some uncomfortable moments for the recipient and a tiff between customs authorities.

A weapons fan from California decided that the missile and its mobile Transport-Erector-Launcher would make an ideal addition to his collection, and ordered one from a small firm near London. The Czech SS1-C was sent by freighter to California, but when it was examined by officials they claim it was not, as the documentation said, properly demilitarised.

The US Customs Service claimed the guidance system and engine were intact and only a warhead was missing. British Customs took a very different view, insisting the missile was deactivated and that nothing illegal had taken place. "It was a dud," said a spokesman.

IN BRIEF

38 killed in Spanish plane crash
A SPANISH plane carrying 38 passengers and crew crashed into a hill near Melilla on the Moroccan coast yesterday, killing all those on board. The British-built BAe 146-100 was preparing to land in the Spanish enclave on its flight from the southern Spanish town of Malaga when it crashed into rough scrubland, apparently because of poor visibility.

Russian cabinet in disarray

RUSSIA'S FLEDGLING government was thrown into turmoil when the Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Shokhin walked out of the cabinet over the re-appointment of Mikhail Zadornov as finance minister. President Boris Yeltsin and Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov had earlier seemed close to completing their cabinet team, picked to tackle Russia's economic crisis.

Turkish Islamists protest at jailing

HUNDREDS of Islamists in Istanbul staged a protest against a court verdict sentencing the mayor of Turkey's largest city to 10 months in jail. The appeals court on Wednesday upheld a sentence against Recep Tayyip Erdogan for "provoking hatred" by reciting a poem deemed to have encouraged Islamic extremism. In January, Turkey's constitutional court outlawed the Islamist Welfare Party.

Uproar over Croatian archbishop

THE ANTI-NAZI Simon Wiesenthal Centre urged the Pope to postpone beatification of the Croatian Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac, expected to take place on 3 October. The controversy revolves around Archbishop Stepinac's role in the fascist regime which ruled Croatia in the Second World War.

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There's a Great Deal going on

One-horned refugees shelter from the flood threatening to wipe out a species

By PETER POPHAM
in Assam

THE RHINOS of Kaziranga are once again in serious trouble. Some decades ago their number was down to a dozen or so. Dedicated work by the staff in the national park has brought them back from the brink: at the last count Kaziranga had 1,164 great Indian one-horned rhinos, about 70 per cent of the species' world population.

But, since the recent disastrous flood that left the park under 18 feet of water, there is no place left in the park for a rhinoceros to stand; and there is no food left for them to eat. Those that have not drowned or been swept away have fled.

I was being driven along National Highway 37, the road that skirts the south of the national park, when I first set eyes on one of these giant refugees. We rounded a corner and a big lorry was parked in the middle of the road. Not stalled: parked, with deliberation.

No more than 30ft ahead was a large rhinoceros, standing in the middle of the road. Beyond, other lorries had stopped, and the huge animal's prehistoric form was silhouetted in their headlights. Exhaust fumes swirled around it. It was a vision out of an apocalypse. A few minutes later the animal trundled off the road and into the trees on the verge and we continued on our way.

The rhinoceros on the road is an emblem of the immense crisis Kaziranga National Park confronts. This is one of the most important and also one of the most successful wildlife reserves in the Indian subcontinent.

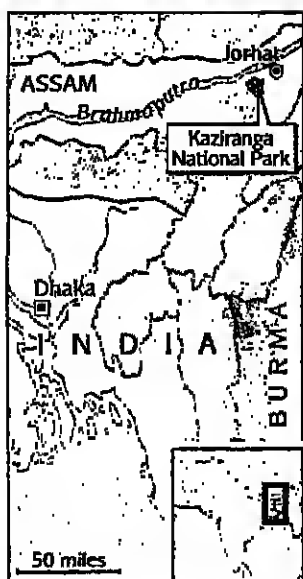
But thanks to this year's floods, which continued for three months, Kaziranga has effectively been turned inside out. The pride of the park – the 1,164 rhinos, 80 or so tigers, the thousands of swamp deer and hog deer on which the tigers prey, the water buffalo – all have been forced to flee.

Within the park, much of the infrastructure painstakingly put together by 500 guards and rangers has been smashed to pieces or washed away: look-out camps, wooden bridges, earth platforms constructed to give the animals a place to retreat – all battered or broken.

Kaziranga's tragedy is particularly poignant because this is a park that has been bucking the odds. The crisis of India's parks and reserves is perennial, and perhaps inevitable. An exploding human population continually threatens to encroach on land reserved for wild animals.

Public moosey to fund the parks is frequently siphoned off by corrupt politicians, leaving the parks gasping for the bare essentials, such as fuel for the jeeps in which the gamekeepers patrol. Salaries can remain unpaid for months. Tempted by the astronomical value of rhino horn in the Far East, where it is an ingredient in traditional Oriental medicine, ruthless, heavily armed poachers are a constant menace.

Two years ago, Kaziranga was in acute crisis. The park depends on a large team of working elephants and all were



A Kaziranga warden feeding an orphaned baby rhino (top), an adult rhino being pulled from the mud after floods in the park (left) and swamp deer grazing (right).

visibly suffering from malnutrition, and three were suspected of having TB.

The problem was that money promised by the state government was simply not arriving. The park was surviving on credit. Hundreds of thousands of rupees was owed for fuel. The guards, who earn £12 a week, had not been paid for months. For want of such pitifully small items as torch batteries, night anti-poaching patrols were sometimes unable to do their work.

As a result of an article in a British magazine describing the park's plight, which evoked a generous response, the situation two years on is in many

respects much improved. The ancient, disintegrating off-road cars were augmented by ocel little Suzukis. Motor boats were bought for patrolling during the monsoon. Much money has been spent on infrastructure. Often there has been no money to maintain or fuel the new cars and boats. But the morale of the park's 500 staff, which even amid the crisis two years ago was strikingly high, remained impressive.

Now Kaziranga is almost back to square one.

Divisional Forest Officer P S Das spelt out the scale of Kaziranga's new disaster. "We've found 31 rhinos drowned so far – one drowning calf was res-

cued. There may well be more drowned carcasses: the full picture will emerge in 15 or 20 days, when the water has receded further; 30 to 40 camps out of 100 have been destroyed. We've lost 21 timber bridges. Sixty-eight of the earth platforms have been damaged, by the animals, the flood or both. There are 100 kilometres of good, driveable road in the park which will need to be cleared and repaired. All of this will take a lot of money, which we don't have."

He added: "We haven't slept for two weeks."

Apart from all the work of putting the park back together again there is also the looming

danger of an eruption of opportunistic poaching.

In the past four years, Kaziranga's guards have had great success in containing poachers. During the Eighties and early Nineties, nearly 35 rhinos per year were murdered in the park for their horns. Since 1994, that average has been reduced to fewer than 13 per year. Until the monsoon, only one rhino had been lost to poachers this year.

But with the park in its present disarray, the poachers are coming at the animals thick and fast. Mr Das recounts four incidents in the past two weeks.

"The day before yesterday we killed two of them," he said,

matter of factly. "We have no regrets about killing poachers, because if we didn't kill them, they would kill us."

With Kaziranga under water and the animals scattered across the countryside, the danger has never been greater. Mr Das is not particularly anxious about the tigers. "They are very good swimmers and they are very agile, very good at saving themselves. They are also extremely difficult to poach. Tigers have not been poached at Kaziranga for years."

The rhinos are a different matter. "The rhinos are good swimmers, too, but now they are hungry and weak. A rhino needs 80 cases of grass per day.

The grass in the park has been ruined."

Now the desperate rhinos are all over the area – up in the Mikir Hills to the south of Highway 37, blundering through tea gardens. "Thirty to forty," said Mr Das, "are in a small area at the western extreme of the park."

It was at exactly that point that I had seen the rhino on the road, days before. Some days later, on the journey back to Guwahati, I saw five more at the same spot. All five were very dead, beached in a still-sodden field half a mile to the north of the highway. Birds were feasting on the carcasses.

Later that day, Assam's chief

minister, Prafulla Mahanta, announced that his government was releasing 5 million rupees (£70,000) "forthwith" for the repair of roads, bridges, earth platforms and camps within the park.

What he omitted to say was that most of this sum was not an extra grant but money long owed to Kaziranga by the state government, and long held up. Kaziranga's unequal struggle goes on.

An India-based charity working to restore Kaziranga National Park is The Rhino Foundation, c/o Tollygunge Club, 120 DP Sasmal Road, Calcutta 700-033, India; telephone 00-91-33-473-3306.



"What a finish Barry!"

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سازمان تبلیغات

THE INDEPENDENT
Saturday 26 September 1998

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BUSINESS

BRIEFING

Wessex part of global water group

WESSEX WATER, which was taken over by Enron of the US for £1.4bn this week, is to become part of a worldwide water business called Azurix, its new owners said yesterday. The Texas-based gas and electricity company said the name came from "azur" meaning a clear blue colour, and "rix" which means root or point of origin.

Nicholas Hood, the chairman of Wessex, will become deputy chairman of the new company, while the former chief executive, Colin Skelton, becomes executive director of technical and operating services. Azurix will be chaired by Enron's Rebecca Mark and will have dual headquarters in Houston and London.

Richest man takes a pay cut



THE RICHEST man in the world suffered a pay cut this year. Bill Gates, chief executive of Microsoft, is also only the second-highest paid official in the company.

Mr Gates was paid a package worth \$542.287 (£325,000) this year, slightly lower than the \$581.353 he was paid in 1997, according to Microsoft accounts filed with the US Securities and Exchange Commission.

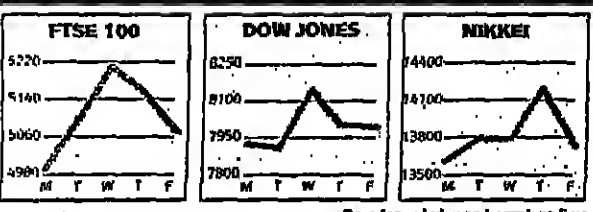
However, Mr Gates's net worth is approximately 100,000 times as big as his pay. *Forbes* magazine estimates that his 20.8 per cent stake in Microsoft, consisting of 513,777,800 shares, is worth around \$11bn, making the 42-year-old comfortably the world's richest man.

Filofax accepts £50m takeover

FILOFAX GROUP, the personal organiser company, has agreed a £50.3m takeover from Day Runner, its US rival, which launched a hostile bid on Thursday. Day Runner increased its initial offer of 200p per share to 210p, a 50 per cent premium to the closing share price on Wednesday. Filofax said the offer "fairly recognises the value we have tried to build".

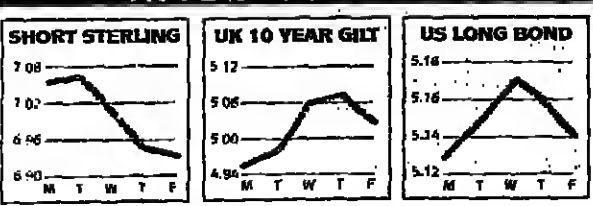
It emerged yesterday that Day Runner discussed a possible deal with Filofax 18 months ago, but could not agree a price. Day Runner has offered to keep on the entire board of Filofax apart from Robin Field, its chief executive. Mr Field will make almost £1m from his shareholding. The biggest individual stake is held by Richard Koch, the management consultant who is a former non-executive director of the company. His 11 per cent stake is worth £5.5m.

STOCK MARKETS



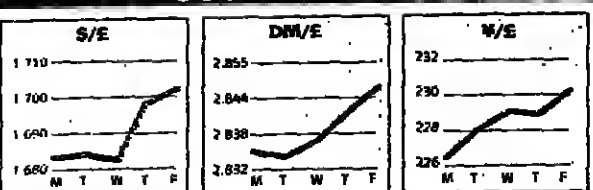
Index	Close	Change	Change (%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Vol
FTSE 100	5061.00	-106.50	-2.06	6183.70	4382.80	3.83
FTSE 250	4528.90	-31.40	-0.69	5970.50	4428.30	4.98
FTSE 350	2417.20	-46.30	-1.90	2982.10	2141.80	4.03
FTSE All Share	3248.95	-64.39	-1.96	3886.72	2108.39	4.04
FTSE SmallCap	2011.50	-31.30	-1.55	2793.80	2032.50	4.21
FTSE 100 Index	1134.90	-8.70	-0.76	1517.10	1740.20	4.50
FTSE AIM	852.40	-6.70	-0.78	1146.90	825.70	1.36
FTSE ETRAC 100	833.94	-11.77	-1.39			
Dow Jones	7987.31	-14.16	-0.18	9357.84	6971.32	1.87
Nikkei	13723.84	-481.94	-3.39	15433.76	12521.13	1.12
Hong Kong	7701.61	-133.00	-1.70	15243.65	6344.79	5.28
Dax	4561.58	-84.67	-1.87	6217.83	3487.24	3.47

INTEREST RATES



Index	3 month	6 month	1 year	2 year	5 year	10 year	Long bond	Yr chg
UK	7.38	6.09	6.94	-0.59	5.03	-1.60	4.64	-1.92
US	5.31	-0.41	5.06	-0.91	4.60	-1.14	5.14	-
Japan	0.44	-0.14	0.48	-0.15	0.84	-1.29	1.36	-1.43
Germany	3.48	0.18	3.57	-0.15	3.97	-1.56	4.95	-1.23

CURRENCIES



POUND				DOLLAR			
	at Spot	Change	Yr Ago		at Spot	Change	Yr Ago
Dollar	1.7022	+0.75%	1.6277	Sterling	0.5875	-0.26p	0.6144
D-Mark	2.8467	+0.49p	2.8788	D-Mark	1.6725	-0.47p	1.7875
Yen	230.01	+0.45	192.43	Yen	135.18	+0.08	121.13
E index	103.40	+0.30	101.10	S index	109.20	-0.30	105.10

OTHER INDICATORS

Index	Close	Chg	Yr Ago	Index	Close	Chg	Yr Ago
Brent Oil (\$)	14.71	0.03	19.05	GDP	115.40	3.00	112.04
Gold (\$)	296.45	2.30	327.15	RPI	163.70	3.30	158.47
Silver (\$)	5.19	0.13	4.75	Base Rates	7.50	7.00	

TOURIST RATES

Country	Rate	Country	Rate
Australia (\$)	2.7689	Mexican (nuevo peso)	15.84
Austria (schillings)	19.25	Netherlands (guilders)	3.0883
Belgium (francs)	56.61	New Zealand (\$)	3.2745
Canada (\$)	2.4927	Norway (krone)	12.19
Cyprus (pounds)	0.8086	Portugal (escudos)	279.83
Denmark (krone)	10.49	Saudi Arabia (riyals)	6.2006
Finland (markka)	8.4344	Singapore (\$)	2.7445
France (francs)	9.1907	Spain (pesetas)	232.40
Germany (marks)	2.7495	South Africa (rand)	9.5624
Greece (drachma)	476.35	Sweden (krone)	13.00
Hong Kong (\$)	12.72	Switzerland (francs)	2.2668
Ireland (pounds)	1.0944	Thailand (bahts)	60.92
India (rupees)	66.40	Turkey (liras)	451397
Israel (shekels)	6.0433	USA (\$)	1.6539
Italy (lira)	2723		
Japan (yen)	223.03		
Malaysia (ringgits)	6.2016		
Malta (lira)	0.6142		

Hedge fund rescue: 'We will never know how close we came to financial Armageddon'

Bear Stearns' \$500m call triggered LTCM crisis

BY ANDREW GARFIELD,
FRANCESCO GUERRERA,
STEPHEN VINES
AND MICHAEL HARRISON

THE \$3.75bn rescue of the US hedge fund Long-Term Capital Management was triggered after the investment bank Bear Stearns called in a \$500m payment on Tuesday, it emerged last night.

Bear Stearns, which handled all the settlements of LTCM's dealings in bonds and derivatives, acted over the margin call after fears that the fund was about to go under with huge losses. The fund had been in technical breach of its banking covenants since the end of June.

As banks around the world disclosed the extent of their exposure, stock markets fell sharply, led by a retreat among banking stocks. Far from reassuring financial markets, the bail-out of LTCM has raised fears about the collapse of more hedge funds.

Up to \$100bn worth of derivative positions in the financial markets could have unravelled had LTCM not been rescued, producing a domino effect that could have triggered multiple bankruptcies among secondary banks.

One senior UK banker said: "We will never know quite how close we came to financial Armageddon."

Dresdner Bank, Germany's third largest bank, disclosed that it expected to write off DM240m this year because of investments it had made in the struggling LTCM.

Deutsche Bank said it planned to contribute \$300m to the bail-out but said it had not made any unsecured funds available to LTCM and had not suffered any loss. The giant Swiss banking group UBS has already written off \$440m on its shareholding in the fund.

In London, the FTSE-100 index of leading shares fell 106.6 points to 5061, as bank

shares fell sharply. Barclays, which is also contributing \$300m to the bail-out and has an additional unspecified exposure, was the worst hit, falling 7.2p, a decline of 7 per cent.

Abbey National, Standard Chartered and HSBC all admitted to having had trading relationships with LTCM. Standard Chartered said its exposure was about \$25m while NatWest's exposure is understood to be \$2m-\$3m.

In Paris, trading in shares in Paribas and Societe Generale was suspended for a time after electronic circuit-breakers came into effect following sharp falls in the stocks. Both companies are talking part in the LTCM bail-out.

The ripples from the near collapse of LTCM were felt as far afield as Taiwan, as China-trust Commercial Bank, part of the Koo conglomerate, said it would suffer an unspecified loss on its exposure to LTCM.

LTCM, which is based in Greenwich, Connecticut with offices in London and run by the former Salomon bond king John Meriwether and two Nobel laureates, is estimated to have lost some \$4bn by ill-timed bets in the bond markets.

It has also emerged that Goldman Sachs, ING Barings and the legendary US investment guru Warren Buffett offered to take over LTCM before Tuesday night's rescue deal. The bail-out was co-ordinated by the US Federal Reserve and supported by 15 international banks and securities firms.

The knock-on effect of allowing the fund to go into liquidation would have severely dented profits of the banks which agreed to participate in the bail-out.

The dramatic events in New York helped depress share prices throughout Asia but also provoked considerable glee from the region where hedge funds are held primarily re-



Top: Anxiety on the faces of three Wall Street traders yesterday, and (below) the Greenwich, Connecticut, headquarters of LTCM, the hedge fund which threatened financial meltdown for the world's banking system

sponsible for triggering the current Asian financial crisis.

Share prices fell yesterday, primarily because of a general fear that Wall Street would tumble after the close of the trading day in the region and because of concerns that big international fund managers would be

forced to withdraw funds from Asian markets to cover exposed positions elsewhere.

Asian banks, unlike their counterparts in Europe and North America, do not have much exposure to hedge funds; nor is there much local hedge fund activity. Most of the funds

active in Asian markets are controlled by overseas companies.

This has helped to make hedge funds public enemy number one in the minds of many Asian governments and in the eyes of public opinion. The Chinese press, for example, regularly refers to them as

"crocodiles" and "sharks". An adviser to Hong Kong's Chief Executive, Tung Chee-hwa, could hardly contain his glee yesterday when asked to comment on the collapse of LTCM. He said: "Now these people are finally having to pay the bill for what they did to us".

How the dream team slipped up

BY ANDREW GARFIELD
Financial Editor

UNLIKE MORE flamboyant hedge fund players such as George Soros and Julian Robertson of Tiger Fund fame, who relished risk, John Meriwether had a reputation as the safe pair of hands who gave a wide berth to markets like Russia where others came unshook.

Yet ironically it was his specialisation in building portfolios of G7 government bonds and other "safe as houses" instruments such as mortgage-backed securities that led him and his "dream team" of Nobel maths laureates to believe they were bigger than the market.

Mr Meriwether and his backers, which included UBS, Dresdner Bank and even the Bank of China, made billions of dollars from the "euro convergence play" where they bought cheap Italian bonds on the assumption that they would yield the same as the German bund as monetary union approached.

Mr Meriwether, in playing one market off against another, relied on the fact that, in all but the most abnormal times, when one market or instrument goes up, another somewhere in the world goes down.

You take big bets in one

market but they are hedged by mirror positions elsewhere in the world.

However, these are not normal times. When the Russian crisis hit, every single market went the same way. Shares crashed in virtually every market around the globe and most bond prices collapsed except for the safest US Treasuries, UK gilts and German bunds. The result was that the gap between Italian and German bond prices actually widened when Long-Term Credit Management had bet the other way.

This meant that LTCM's derivatives positions, taken out as insurance policies, became ruinously expensive. By Tuesday LTCM was about to run out of money.

Mr Meriwether used complex mathematical instruments to identify the discrepancies between markets. Hence the need for the two Nobel Prize-winners, Myron Scholes and Robert Merton, as advisers. The discrepancies were often small - the trading margins on US treasuries and European government bonds are wafer-

thin - but bonds were excellent collateral, enabling Mr Meriwether to borrow up to 20 times his capital base of \$8bn before the crisis.

Until now, lending money to fund LTCM's huge bets has proved to be very profitable business for the banks. Much of the lending was on a repurchase or repo basis, where the lender gets possession of the securities bought by LTCM. Also Mr Meriwether, a former trader, paid generous commissions to those who dealt with him.

The huge profits to be made meant that big international banks, including Barclays, NatWest and Abbey National, chose to ignore the fact that they were dealing with a counter-party that never filed accounts and about which next to nothing was known. The big creditors glossed over the fact that LTCM had been technically in breach of its banking covenants and still money flowed in.

"What killed them," said one banker yesterday, "was arrogance, not so much of Meriwether but of his associates. They forgot that, however big you are, the markets are always bigger."

AROUND THE WORLD'S MARKETS

LONDON

WORRIES about hedge funds hit equities. The FTSE 100 slid 106.6 points to 5,061, and the mid and small cap indices descended to new lows for year.

Downgrades from analysts also took their toll. Glaxo Wellcome suffered a 90p hit to 1,708p as Goldman Sachs took the shares off its buy list. Centrica, the gas group, was a top performer, climbing 4p to a 121p closing peak on its electricity expansion and prospects for gas exports.

Derek Pain, page 21

NEW YORK

STOCKS FELL for a second day on concern that losses at banks and brokerages will multiply because of their involvement with one of the world's riskiest hedge funds.

American Express, Chase Manhattan and other financial companies declined after Credit Suisse Group, UBS and Dresdner Bank said they would write off investments in Long-Term Capital Management.

The Dow Jones was down 18.02 points to 7982.97 by midday.

TOKYO

THE STOCK market fell over 3 per cent on Friday amid renewed concern about the fragile banking system and Wall Street. The Nikkei average closed 481.94 points or 3.39 per cent lower at 13,723.84. Nikkei December futures were down 460 at 13,780.

Comments by a high-ranking Japanese official fuelled concern that key banking legislation would be further delayed, which compounded institutional worries surrounding the bail-out of the hedge fund LTCM.

HONG KONG

SHARE PRICES closed lower, but off lows, on profit-taking in the wake of losses on Wall Street and in Tokyo, prompted by concerns over the failure of the US hedge fund LTCM. The Hang Seng index closed down 133.00 points at 7,701.61.

Dealers said falls were limited by expectations of interest rate cuts in the US and China. There is widespread speculation the HKMA is stepping up its end of month action in the futures market.

FRANKFURT

DEUTSCHE BANK and other financial stocks were among the fallers in Frankfurt after UBS warned that it would report a third-quarter loss of up to \$91bn on Thursday. After a volatile day the DAX Xetra index ended down 26.93 points at 4,584.4.

Siemens fell on reports that it would announce year's profits down to DM1bn (DM2.6bn last year) amid quality and delivery problems at its train and gas turbine divisions. Siemens said the reports were "speculation".

[illegible][illegible]

The real clowns are the bankers

IT'S A CURIOUS thing about prolonged periods of prosperity but human beings appear quite incapable of having them without eventually drowning the effect in an orgy of financial excess. It was true of the high rolling 1980s, and it now appears true of the boom of the 1990s.

Generally, it is the financial excess itself which brings these periods of prosperity to an end. That was certainly so in the 1980s and it seems to be true of the 1990s, too.

Each time the excess takes different forms, which is why bankers and others have such difficulty in seeing or correcting the position until it is too late. But the unifying feature is nearly always an explosion in credit. It is therefore reasonable to see bankers and financial markets as invariably instrumental in the boom and the bust of the business cycle.



JEREMY WARNER

Every time a boom ends, bankers come out looking like plonkers. How could they have been so stupid?

Bankers nearly always come out of the process looking like plonkers. How could they have been so stupid, is the common refrain every time a boom ends in a burst of bad debts. What clowns, what idiots!

Last time it was dodgy financiers and entrepreneurs who stung the

banks - Robert Maxwell, Michael Milken and the like. This time the fault seems to have been in an over-expansion of credit within financial markets themselves. The chief beneficiaries were the hedge fund operators and the proprietary trading operations of big investment banks.

Armed with Nobel Prize-winning economists, state-of-the-art

computer modelling and mathematical equations that only they understood, they came guaranteeing 30 per cent-plus returns a year. We've found the secret, they said - just turn on, tune in and drop out.

Hedge funds are just the latest manifestation of that old, deluded belief that money doesn't need to be earned, but can be conjured up out of nothing. Only now is it becoming clear how close to the edge it brought us. Martin Taylor, chief executive of Barclays, laments the near-collapse of John Meriwether's Long-Term Capital Management to a mile-wide meteorite heading towards the earth. For a long time, everybody tickled along blissfully unaware of the cataclysmic threat coming at us from outer space.

Thanks to the efforts of the US Federal Reserve in hurriedly organising a rescue, disaster has been averted, but, boy, how appalling it could have been. For the time being, the crisis is over; but we are still seeing some of its after-effects in the markets, with both the FTSE and Dow sharply off. To extend Mr Taylor's metaphor, the meteorite has in the end missed us, but the shock of discovering how

close to Armageddon we were has left a severe state of the jitters.

To understand the enormity of what's happened, it is worth revisiting some of the detail. LTCM is one of the largest hedge funds around, and it applies a much higher degree of leverage than other, smaller funds. Those who ran the fund were people of high reputation in financial markets. Also, LTCM confined itself to apparently "safe" trading strategies in G7 bonds. As a result, bankers were more than happy to lend on favourable terms. In any event, by the end LTCM, a fund with capital of just \$4bn, was playing these markets to the tune of anything up to \$100bn.

One of LTCM's strategies was the so-called "convergence play" - the assumption that Italian bonds would converge ahead of monetary union with lower yielding German bonds. Unfortunately nobody bargained for the crisis in emerging markets. The Russian meltdown caused a general flight to safety in financial markets and the spread in this and other positions widened, rather than narrowing as it should have done. This took place at a time when bankers and investors were reign-

ing in everywhere. The cost of credit was rising and its availability was shrinking. As always in such events, bankers began to foreclose.

What made the situation much more serious than a normal bankruptcy was the size of the sums involved. The hedge fund industry as a whole is said to total some \$300bn, but the use of bank borrowings, or leverage, means its exposure to markets is much greater. To have allowed the enforced liquidation of such a large fund's positions might have had a disastrous effect on markets. The losses would have caused a domino effect through the banking system, resulting in multiple bankruptcies among hedge funds and other proprietary trading operations.

In the end, then, this was less a case of the crisis in emerging markets striking at the heart of the Western financial system, which is how it has been widely portrayed, than a necessary piece of emergency surgery by the Fed to stop US markets causing a global financial meltdown. The only link with the turmoil in emerging markets was that this had caused Western bankers to become more risk-

averse. The difference is an important one, for the lessons we are learning from all this are more to do with the West than the East.

The most important of these is quite how fragile and reckless Western financial markets had become. John Meriwether and other hedge fund operators are only able to run the trading strategies they do, most of which rely on massive positions for wafer thin margins, because credit is available to them at very limited cost. This in turn is because at the top of every banking cycle there is always a huge excess of capital desperately searching for a home. In other cycles the money has gone into property, small business, and sometimes to crooked financiers. This time round it went to hedge funds.

The hope has to be that the worst is now over. Obviously there are other hedge funds and investment banks in a perilous condition, but none of them appear to be as large as LTCM. A debacle of this sort must prompt regulatory action, and the rules are bound to be tightened. But actually the position may be self-correcting. Banks have presumably learned their lesson, and

the cost of credit to hedge funds will now rise, curtailing their ability to run the sort of positions in markets they have.

In the meantime, we are all going to have to live with the fallout. Some huge losses have been sustained in the banking system and elsewhere as a result of the turmoil in financial markets. For the real economy - our pockets and our jobs, that is - the effect cannot be anything other than negative in the extreme.

PETER MANDELSON, President of the board of trade, is feeling more than a little fed up with our Outlook item yesterday in which we said he had been lobbied by PowerGen over its bid for East Midlands Electricity before taking up his present post - and justifiably so.

I'm happy to make clear on his behalf that he was not lobbied, and indeed could not have taken the decision giving PowerGen conditional clearance if he had been. The rules are clear on these issues - Trade Secretaries are required to stand aside and let someone else take the decision if there is a connection of this sort.

Glaxo suffers a setback as shares take another dive

SHARES COLLAPSED again as analysts axed profit forecasts and worries about the hedge fund crisis deepened.

Glaxo Wellcome was a major casualty as Goldman Sachs removed the shares from its list of buy recommendations. The US investment house, after reviewing Glaxo's key products, is now forecasting five-year compound earnings growth at 10-11 per cent, down from 13-14 per cent.

The shares, which had performed much better than many other Footsie constituents in the summertime slump, dropped 90p (after 138p) to 1,708p. They touched a 1,983p peak in January when excitement was running high over the proposed mega-merger with SmithKline Beecham which was subsequently aborted.

Glaxo suffered its wounding setback just ahead of what are thought to be encouraging drug developments. The pharmaceutical giant is expected over the weekend to produce evidence at a San Diego conference that Relenza, its flu drug, is effective. And, intriguingly in view of the Goldman caution, Glaxo may have other positive developments lined up for the San Diego meeting. It plans to release information on other key drugs including two HIV treatments, and hepatitis and asthma drugs.

Bankers were hammered by BT Alex Brown, which cut profit forecasts by an aggregate of 10 per cent. Barclays, off 72p to 993p, was chopped from £2.8bn to £2.3bn. The shares touched 1,949p in July.

Other bank shares hit by

LEEDS GROUP, the textile concern, slipped to a new year's low of 38.5p. Although operating in an unfashionable industry, the shares could be oversold. The company has said it intends to pay a 4.6p final dividend, which puts the shares on a 22.4 per cent yield. The p/e is 2.5.

Cash was £4.3m in the last balance sheet, which could be bolstered by a litigation settlement.

the BT axe included National Westminster Bank, down 42.5p to 845p, and Lloyds TSB, 29p to 661p.

Elsewhere Diageo, following its results, had to contend with lowered estimates, and the shares weakened 17.5p to 480.5p, lowest since the merger.

Cadbury Schweppes and Tate & Lyle were soured by SG Securities sell advice, with Cad-

MARKET REPORT

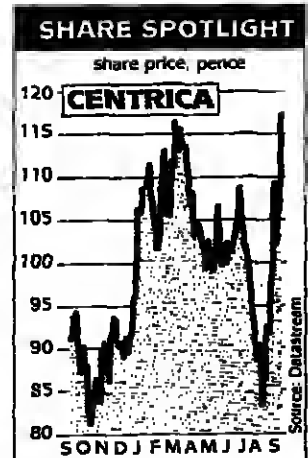


DEREK PAIN

bury 39.5p off at 788.5p and Tate 4.5p at 520p.

There were some analytical bulls around. Schroders liked water shares; Lehman Brothers and Williams de Broe alighted on Enterprise Oil and Sutherland's said buy the BT chemical group, although it downgraded its profits estimate.

Footsie ended a ragged session off 106.6 points at 5,061. Fears that the hedge fund crisis could escalate, putting more pressure on the banks, weighed heavily on sentiment, obliterating any possible reward from the seeming inevitable march to lower interest rates.



With New York weak overnight and during London hours, and Far Eastern markets doleful, shares seemed set for a hiding from the opening bell.

Supporting shares endured acute discomfort, with the mid and small cap indices hitting new lows for the year.

Centrica, the once neglected spit from the old British Gas, had the distinction of topping the Footsie leader board for a time.

The shares were 8p higher until they lost ground and had to settle for a 4p gain to 121p, a closing peak. Their achievement stems from Centrica's electricity expansion and expectations of gas exports, particularly to Italy. BG, the other half of the gas demerger, rose 12.75p to 393.75p.

Punch-drunk Bass, down from a 1,175p high, recovered

a modest 17p to 655p, and EMI, up 17.25p to 353p, was another to attract bargain hunters.

Asda improved 2.25p to 169.25p after the Credit Lyonnais sell drubbing, and Kingfisher's decision to merge its B&Q offshoot with Castorama Dubois of France was well received, helping the shares 14p higher to 525p.

Business Post, the delivery group, continued to encounter fallout from its boardroom brawl. The shares dipped another 15p to 225p, lowest for three years. They topped 550p in the spring.

Another devastated share, Ionica, fell a further 7.25p to 14.75p. Last year they touched 421p. The latest setback followed an announcement that the fledgling telephone group

A LEADING US investment fund has taken a shine to a member of the beverage - Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries, which is carrying out a share buy-back programme. Tweedy Browne has picked up nearly 2.2 million shares and now has a 3.88 per cent. The Wolves shares, like those of most regional brewers, bump along near a five-year low. They held at 396p; in June they hit 556p.

may be rescued - but at a price below the market level.

Wiggins, the property developer raising £4.4m through a rights issue at 10p, shaded 0.5p to 11p.

Fairland, the textile group, held at 31.5p. There are suggestions it could follow the example of the wool group John Haggas and go private.

Profit warnings continued to appear. Eldridge Pope, the brewer-turned-pub owner, lost 37.5p to 141.5p after complaining about summer trading in its pubs. Panmure Gordon, the company's stockbroker, slashed its year's profits estimate from £8.2m to £5.5m.

Alpha Airports, ahead of figures, fell 8.5p to 38.5p; the department stores chain House of Fraser, another with results next week, fell 4p to 89.5p. A loss of around £1.7m is expected.

The electronic nose group Aromascan slumped 1p to 4.5p after revealing a rescue £2.7m cash call. The rights price is 2p. The shares were floated four years ago at 100p and touched 182p.

SEAQ VOLUME: 848.6m
SEAQ TRADES: 63,031
GILT'S INDEX: n/a

COMPANY RESULTS

Name	Turnover (£)	Pre-tax (£)	EPS	Dividend	Pay day	X-div
Adrian (I)	3,970m (0.750)	-0.125m (0.000)	-7.7p (1.7p)	2.2p (2.2p)	12.11.98	05.10.98
Chelco (I)	2,410m (0.300)	0.645m (0.100)	1.53p (0.75p)	1.30p (0.5p)	27.11.98	05.10.98
C.I.S. Holdings (I)	16.13m (19.81m)	5.030m (5.000m)	4.0p (4.4p)	2.4p (1.1)	27.11.98	15.10.98
Car Insurance (I)	-	-	-	0.9p (0.9p)	26.11.98	26.10.98
Car Insurance (I)	9,650m (10.07m)	-1.488m (-3.257m)	-3.3p (4.11p)	-	-	-
Chelco (I)	2,780m (2.940)	0.114m (0.114m)	0.85p (1.01p)	0.85p (1.01p)	01.12.98	02.11.98
Chelco (I)	15,300m (15.300)	0.708m (0.657m)	12.88p (11.20p)	12.88p (11.20p)	18.11.98	05.10.98
Chelco (I)	10,300m (10.300)	0.607m (0.300m)	1.75p (1.07p)	0.80p (0.40p)	18.11.98	05.10.98
Chelco (I)	10,450m (10.450)	1.283m (1.100m)	6.60p (6.27p)	2.2p (2.2p)	16.10.98	-
Wiggins (I)	17,830m (19.900)	5.100m (4.970m)	0.6p (0.60p)	-	-	-

(I) = Profit (I) = Income



Kingfisher's B&Q chain will merge with Castorama of France to create a £4bn DIY powerhouse. Kingfisher's ambition is to become a pan-European force

B&Q in £4bn DIY merger

KINGFISHER, the Woolworths and Comet retailer, is to merge its B&Q subsidiary with Castorama of France to create a £4bn DIY powerhouse.

The deal is the latest in a series of moves by Kingfisher's chief executive, Sir Geoff Mulcahy, to make Kingfisher a pan-European force. It also makes the combined group the third largest DIY retailer in the world after Home Depot and Lowes of the US.

Commenting on the deal yesterday, Sir Geoff said: "The merger is founded on our shared belief that successful mass-market retailers will combine strong local market positions with international expansion, thus providing customers with benefits of scale in value, range and service."

By Nigel Cope
ASSOCIATE CITY EDITOR

which is expected to be earnings-neutral in its first year and make a positive contribution thereafter. Nick Bubb, retail analyst at SG Securities, said: "It is a very clever deal as the alternative - making a bid for Castorama - would have been very expensive. They should be able to get good synergies and it increases Kingfisher's exposure to the French economy at an attractive time in the cycle."

Kingfisher shares closed 17.5p higher at 528.5p.

Kingfisher will receive shares representing 54.6 per cent of Castorama share capital. However, it will be restricted to the exercise of 50 per cent of the votes for two and half years.

IN BRIEF

LSE to change share calculation

THE London Stock Exchange has announced changes to the way closing share prices are calculated to try to stamp out the "rogue traders" that have dogged its new electronic system.

From 14 December the Exchange will calculate a closing price for each stock using an average of trading prices over the last 10 minutes of the day. Low volumes at the end of the trading day have led to the share price volatility.

Russia 'critical'

THE International Monetary Fund (IMF) yesterday called the economic position in Russia "critical", but said it would only give Russia more funds if the government worked out an appropriate economic programme.

In a statement released after a senior delegation left Moscow without an agreement on disbursing a \$4.3bn (£2.6bn) loan, the IMF said: "The economic situation in Russia is critical and must be resolutely addressed."

"The government will need to consider urgently the narrow range of alternatives still available and quickly decide on economic strategy. IMF management would consider the size and timing of further disbursements once such a... program had been agreed."

Fitch attacks G7

FITCH IBCA, the credit rating agency, has warned that the "apparent lack of policy response" of the G7 leading industrial nations could jeopardise world growth.

In its six-monthly review of sovereign credit ratings, the agency argues that the apparent lack of G7 action has made it more likely that world activity will "turn out in line with the pessimists". The most pessimistic forecasters predict that G7 growth will slow to 0.9 per cent in 1999, the lowest level since the recession of 1991, says Fitch.



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SPORT

A city remembers: Next week Manchester United return for the first time to the scene of the air disaster 40 years ago

The poignant legacy of Munich

BY STEFANIE KREISS
in Munich

THE RETIRED nurse still remembers the Busby Babes as if they had been here yesterday. "The injuries were worse than what I had seen on the Russian front," said Gerda Thiel, who is now 86 years old.

For Gerda Thiel and those of her generation the memories will come flooding back next week when Manchester United play their first match in Munich since the air crash 40 years ago which claimed the lives of eight members of Matt Busby's young team and left others with appalling injuries.

It is remarkable that it has taken all this time for United and Bayern Munich to face each other in European competition, but the two teams will finally meet next week in the Champions' League.

The Munich air crash, understandably, does not hold the same place in German sporting history as it does in England's. In particular, the event is of little significance to younger people here in the Bavarian capital.

However, for many older people here - particularly those who worked at the town hall 40 years ago, the fans of that generation and the scores of emergency workers who battled to save the lives of the players and other members of the United party - the visit by Alex Ferguson's team will be a poignant moment.

In particular, there has been much talk here of the strong parallels between the Busby Babes and Ferguson's young side. Just as Busby's team were, to quote one

'Some of the injuries were so bad that one of our girls burst into tears in the operating theatre'

newspaper, "the flower of British football", so the current United side feature many of the best British players of today.

It was on 6 February 1958 that a twin-engine British European Airways plane, carrying 17 Manchester United players plus coaching staff, officials and journalists, landed at Munich airport in order to refuel. The party were returning to Manchester from Yugoslavia after beating Red Star Belgrade in the European Cup quarter-finals.

In heavy snow, the pilot twice aborted take-off because "the engines didn't sound right". On the third attempt the plane failed to gain enough speed as it left the runway. It crashed through a fence and burst into flames after hitting a house, a tree, a wooden hut and a parked truck. Ice on the wings was initially blamed for the crash, but later investigations showed that slush dragging on the wheels had been the cause.

Among those who died were the United captain, Roger Byrne, his England team-mate, Tommy Taylor, and Duncan Edwards, who many believed would have become one of the game's greatest players. Eight journalists also perished. Busby himself suffered terrible injuries but recovered to lead United to eventual European glory 10 years later.

An hour after the disaster, Gerda Thiel, the senior nurse at the Rechts der Isar hospital, received a phone call from one of the doctors who had been summoned to the scene of the crash. "He told me about the catastrophe and ordered me to organise as many of the young nurses as I could," she remembers. This was not easy because it was carnival time in



Gerda Thiel (top), one of the nurses who treated the United players, with a contemporary newspaper story about the 'Angels of Munich'; (below) Matt Busby is surrounded by nursing staff in hospital. Thiel believes that the 'close emotional ties' which developed between the two cities helped the post-war reconciliation between Britain and Germany. Camay Sungu/Popperfoto

Munich and many of the women were about to leave for one of the numerous parties in the city.

But Sister Gerda managed to contact most of the nurses living in homes on the hospital grounds. When the first ambulances from the airport arrived, they were ready.

Many of the younger staff had not been mentally prepared for the carnage. "Some of the injuries were so bad that one of our girls burst into tears in the operating theatre", Mrs Thiel says.

Nurse Katharina Koppe, now 66 and retired, was in charge of looking after Busby. He had severe chest injuries in addition to several fractures, but went on to make a remarkable recovery. Three months later he was a spectator on crutches at Wembley as United's makeshift team lost an emotional FA Cup final to Bolton.

"When he felt better, he started to joke with me. We laughed a lot," Mrs Koppe recalled. "After a while, he even tried to learn German and made me teach him simple sentences."

However, Busby never warmed to Bavarian food, she said. For breakfast, for example, he always preferred bacon and eggs to

the German bread, butter and jam. Busby's relatives who came to see him were "fine, nice people, who were very thankful for what we did," Mrs Koppe said. Busby's wife helped her to feed the patient and taught her how to make proper English tea.

This first intense contact with British people 12 years after the end of the war left a lasting impression on Mrs Koppe. Her fondness for Britain grew so strong, that after her retirement some years ago, she started to learn English properly for the first time in her life.

Relations between staff and the players receiving treatment were extremely good, cutting across suspicions that existed between the two nations in those days. "Maybe it was more effective than what the politicians sometimes tried to do," Mrs Thiel says. She recalled how some of the doctors and nurses were invited to Manchester about a month after the crash and were enthusiastically greeted at Old Trafford by 60,000 people.

"We are still thankful that the crash did not lead to a deterioration of the contacts between our city and Manchester," says Gertraud Burkert, Munich's deputy mayor. So soon

after 1945 people could have connected the horrors of the war with another disaster taking place on German soil. "But the opposite was the case", Burkert said. "The emergency situation fostered close emotional ties."

In May 1997, the city invited all the United players who survived the crash to Munich for the Champions' League final between Juventus and Borussia Dortmund, which was staged in the Bavarian capital. At the suggestion of the seven former players who accepted the invitation a memorial stone was erected at the scene of the crash.

At next week's match, however, no official act of remembrance is planned. "A minute's silence for the victims would have been possible, but we don't want to do it," said Mr Burkert. "Bayern fans come from the whole of Germany, and many are young and therefore might not remember what happened here. This might not be the setting for a dignified commemoration."

However, for Gerda Thiel, Katharina Koppe and those of another generation, no ceremony will be necessary to bring back memories of one of the most traumatic episodes of their lives.



Everyone adores a winner with the Tupper traits

WHAT DID we find most appealing about Alf Tupper. Tough of the Track? Certainly we appreciated his ability to respond to adversity - nail poking up through sole of running shoe, unfair elbowing from disdainful aristocratic opponents usually resulting in our man picking himself up off the cinder track and setting off in redoubled pursuit - "I'll run 'em" - with teeth clenched.

But the same of Alf, surely, was his makeshift lifestyle - long days working as a welder, hasty fish-and-chip suppers shared with his faithful hound in the workshop before setting off to do battle with the toffs and the indigestion.

Had Alf ever been in a position to claim National Lottery funding, who knows how his lot might have changed? Perhaps he would have set himself up with a nice little mi-



MIKE ROWBOTTOM

crowave oven and a freezer full of pasta dishes.

It would be nice to think, however, that such assistance would not have radically altered his life. After all, it hasn't much changed that of Michael Jones.

Britain's leading hammer thrower, who won a silver medal at the Commonwealth Games earlier this month, works a 50-hour week as a warehouseman in the village of Capel, near Crawley. He does his weight-training during his lunch-breaks - "all my mates think I'm an animal," he says.

The Australian to whom Jones narrowly lost in Kuala Lumpur had trained for a year in Germany with the current world champion, Heinz Weis, thanks to funding from the Australian Institute of Sport.

For his own throwing practice, Jones had to make a deal with a local farmer which involved laying a seven foot by 10 foot concrete slab in a field for what the local council would probably describe as "dual use". The farmer uses it for manoeuvring his tractor into the field,

and Jones uses what he fondly describes as his "little lump of concrete" to launch a bombardment on the strawberries and leeks growing 75 metres away at the top of the hill.

Britain's bobsleighers had a similar story to tell after taking the bronze medal at this year's Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan. While their German, French, Austrian and Swiss rivals had enjoyed out-of-season training on their home courses, the British quartet got themselves down to Thorpe Park, in Surrey.

In a nettle-bound space behind the main children's theme park, they worked long hours pushing a rusting practice bob along two rails. Once they had hopped in, of course, they had to hop out again and drag the bob back to the start - it wasn't going anywhere, after all.

The Tupper Factor: There's nothing like it.

In an era replete with sensible health advice - for zinc, eat plenty of shellfish; get your magnesium from soy beans - it is a positive tonic to find someone who manages to combine sporting success with a humanly fallible lifestyle. Everybody loves a winner - but everybody adores a winner who appreciates a beer or two. Or even admits to having a spot of what they fancy every now and again.

Jones's hammer-throwing team-mate in England's Commonwealth team, Lorraine Shaw, brightened the day for many observers when she admitted after taking the silver medal that she needed to lose a bit of weight - but just couldn't. "I love my sweets," she said. "And I love my Chinese food." Good on you, girl.

The old image of professional darts players as pot-bellied, lager-swilling, chain-smokers has been airbrushed away to the point where only the bellies attest to the lifestyle as they perform for the television cameras.

But a glance at the pot-bellied, lager-swilling, chain-smoking spectators attests to the fact that while you can take the game out of the pub, you can't take the pub out of the game. Not, that is, without denuding it of its essential quality.

One of the finest things about darts and, indeed, other sports such as lawn bowls, is that you don't need to be at the pinnacle of physical perfection to be very good at them.

The introduction of tempin bowling to this year's Commonwealth Games appeared to be an extension

of this principle. And the ungainly, rounded, or ageing appearance of some of the protagonists bore it out.

Encouraged, I spoke to the Romford-born coach of the Malaysian team, Sid Allen, about his players' background. "There is a huge pressure of expectation on them here," he said.

It was a promising start, and I awaited further details. Something along the lines of "So why shouldn't they have the odd cigarette?" or "What harm is there in a couple of drinks?" would have done nicely at this point.

Allen, however, went on: "All these bowlers train in the gym for three hours a day and then practise for four hours - seven days a week. Cherish the Tupper. They're getting fitter and fitter between."

Lewy
BOXING

Mathers

Shakes
join the

Lewis sets sights on Holyfield

BOXING
BY GILYN LEACH

"ARE YOU looking at me?" Lennox Lewis requests the attention of the American television public this evening, when he defends his World Boxing Council Heavyweight championship against a No 1 contender whose taste in hairstyles runs no further than Travis Bickle, Robert De Niro's fearsome Mohawk anti-hero in *Taxi Driver*. Lewis hopes that an emphatic victory over the unbeaten Croatian challenger, Zeljko Mavrovic, will heap odious comparison upon his chief rival, Evander Holyfield, resulting in Lewis becoming widely acclaimed as the world's leading heavyweight.

Last weekend, America's "free" TV multitudes had the opportunity to see Holyfield in his first non-pay-per-view fight in two years. But the World Boxing Association and International Boxing Federation champion looked distinctly average when outpointing the unfancied Vaughn Bean, and Lewis believes that Holyfield will regret that fight being made available to the widest possible TV audience.

Back-to-back victories over Mike Tyson earned Holyfield an almost legendary status; Lewis lagged far behind him in the opinion polls. But Holyfield was elected by a blind constituency; pay-per-view TV coverage prevented the bulk of Holyfield's new legion of admirers from seeing the Tyson fights.

"Holyfield had the perfect style against Mike Tyson, but against anyone else he is struggling," Lewis said. "I am glad that the Bean fight was on free TV in the USA, so that everyone got the chance to see it. My mouth was watering a bit - Holyfield looks very beatable."

"I think after his performance the other night, people will be asking Holyfield: 'Why are you ducking Lennox Lewis? Why don't you fight him? And why is there only one heavyweight champion of the world?'"

Why indeed? Lewis's trainer, Emanuel Steward, lays the blame at his former employer's door. "If Evander really wanted this fight, I believe it would be made," said the Detroit veteran.



Emanuel Steward prepares Lennox Lewis for tonight's world title fight against Zeljko Mavrovic. The trainer denied suggestions that Lewis is lacking motivation. Allsport

"But I believe Holyfield is afraid of Lennox Lewis."

But what about Mavrovic? You could be forgiven for thinking that Lewis is looking past tonight's challenger, much as he did in September 1994 when another unsung mandatory contender, Oliver McCall, handed Lewis his only defeat in 34 fights (27 wins by KO). Then Lewis looked ahead to a potentially titanic clash with Riddick Bowe, disastrously so - McCall won with a second-round knockout.

But the manner in which Lewis's camp has attempted to dispel rumours of complacency has only served to add to the suspicions. Witness the opening statement of his manager, Frank Maloney, on a media telephone conference earlier this week: "The rumours that Lennox is not taking this fight seriously, is not in shape, is not motivated, are completely untrue - I've never seen him so motivated or up for a fight."

Witness Steward's attempt to defuse speculation that a rift has

developed between himself and Lewis. Taking his turn on the conference call, Steward gushed: "I give you an A+ today Junior. I really enjoyed listening to you answer those questions."

Beyond dispute, Lewis has received Mavrovic's undivided attention. "I've prepared for 11 months - I always train seriously," said the Croat. And Mavrovic has appeared remarkably confident and self-possessed on the verge of by far the biggest test of his unbeaten, 27-fight (22 wins by stoppage) career.

The former European champion, German-based, believes that his speed and mobility will enable him to steal the title with a points decision. "I am so, so fast for him," he said.

Lewis, meanwhile, predicts a knock-out victory that will earn him the widespread recognition he always seems to be striving for but, so far, has never received. "My strategy is simple: to search and destroy," he said. "I can't even remember the last time I went the distance [May

1996, when Lewis struggled against Ray Mercer]. I don't plan on this going 12 rounds, but anything can happen in boxing."

Indeed it can and if Lewis is not at his best, Mavrovic is capable of causing an upset. Lewis must banish from his mind all thoughts of a mega-fight with Holyfield. To paraphrase Mavrovic's style guru, Mr Bickle, Lewis must concentrate on Mavrovic to the exclusion of all others - because there will be no one else there. Also this evening, in Nor-

wich, another of the world's heavyweight champions will strive to earn recognition when Herbie Hide defends his World Boxing Organisation title against Germany's Willi Fischer. Hide should record his 31st win in 32 fights without much difficulty; Fischer, despite only one loss in 23 fights, can will be fortunate if he reaches half-way in this scheduled 12-rounder.

Hide vs Fischer, *Saturday Night Fight*, 8pm-10pm, Sky Sports One; Lewis vs Mavrovic, 10pm-6am, Sky Box Office 3.

Slater leads Aussie charge

CRICKET

A CAREER-BEST 221 by their opener, Michael Slater, gave Australia a flying start to their tour of Pakistan as they reached 438 for 5 against Karachi on the first day of the four-day match yesterday.

Half-centuries by Steve and Mark Waugh further boosted the innings and they exploited the pedestrian Karachi attack, maintaining a run-rate of more than 4.5 an over. The only disappointed batsman was Mark Taylor who scored only one. The last time the Australian captain played here four years ago, he collected a pair.

Slater, dropped on the third ball of the match, bottled for over five hours, receiving 260 balls. He hit 24 boundaries and six sixes. He was involved in two fruitful partnerships after Taylor won the toss and elected to bat. For the second wicket, he added 132 runs with Mark Waugh whose 94-ball 66 included seven fours and two sixes. For the third wicket, he put on 221 runs in just 132 minutes with Steve Waugh, who made 92.

The future of Middlesex's Australian coach, John Buchanan, was looking uncertain following a statement issued by the club yesterday. Vinnie Co-dington, the Middlesex secretary, said: "There's been much speculation regarding the coaching situation. However, certain individuals will need to be spoken to privately and confidentially before any announcements are made."

It now seems that the way is clear for Mike Gatting, who retired at the end of this season, to take over.

Alan Jones has retired as Glamorgan's director of coaching after 42 years with the county. The 59-year-old opener scored 36,049 runs in first-class cricket, a record for a non-Test player. He was appointed county coach in 1984.

Featherstone's new job

GAVIN FEATHERSTONE, the coach who took Olton's women into the Premier League and Oxford University's men into the National League, is back in business. He has been engaged by former National League club Coventry and North Warwick, who finished in the lower reaches of the DIT Midlands Premier League last season.

The club's chairman, Nick Irvine, said yesterday: "We are looking to the man who has coached the USA and South Africa to the Olympics to get us back into the National League."

Featherstone, who has initially given himself two years to

HOCKEY
BY BILL COLWILL

obtain success with the club, will be at the helm tomorrow when they play Chesterfield in the first round of the EHF Cup.

Old Georgians is another club with National League ambitions and they entertain Hockey in the Cup tomorrow having won their Preliminary round game away to Oxbott 4-0.

Paul Way, who last season featured in Teddington's European Cup campaign, has joined the Surrey side as their player-coach and will line up alongside

another notable signing, Mahmood Bhatti, the former England and East Grinstead striker. With an array of former National League players in the squad Old Georgians could pose a difficult challenge.

Their neighbours, Old Cranleighans, who reached the quarter-finals of the Cup last season before going down to eventual winners and National League champions Camock, start their Cup campaign this afternoon away at Hendon.

Eastcote play Premier League Guildford in the team's last warm-up game before their National League season.

Two riders expelled from Tour of Spain

TWO RIDERS were expelled from the Tour of Spain yesterday after failing blood tests.

Spain's Daniel Clavero, who was lying seventh, was thrown out of the race before yesterday's 20th stage in Segovia.

His Vitalicio Seguros teammate Jose Carlos Dominguez was also expelled after testers from the international federation, UCI, made early-morning calls at five team hotels.

Both riders had unacceptably high haematocrit levels. Anyone with a blood concentration, known as the haematocrit level,

which exceeds 50 per cent is considered unfit to race.

A high haematocrit level could be caused by a variety of reasons, one of which is doping with erythropoietin, EPO, which enhances the oxygen-carrying capacity of the blood. EPO use was at the root of the drug purge on the Tour de France.

The decision means neither rider can be selected for the world road championships at Valkenburg, the Netherlands, from October 6.

Mims ready for change

JUST THREE games into the new Budweiser League season and the Greater London Leopards coach, Billy Mims, is threatening to make changes to his team even before tomorrow's meeting with last season's runners-up, Birmingham Bulls.

The champion's dismal start reached crisis level with the mid-week 90-84 home defeat against

BASKETBALL
BY RICHARD TAYLOR

the unbeaten leaders, Derby Storm. "I can't get any new players in time for the game at Birmingham, but I may not have all of the old ones," Mims said. "Players are not performing up to expectation and changes are on the cards."

Leopards won their opening fixture at Newcastle Eagles, but last weekend's defeat at Sheffield Sharks was followed by the dismal showing against Derby. "I've got to find another 20 points from somewhere and we have to consider whether we have the right mix of players," Mims said. "Something has got to be fixed and, with a club like this, it has to be fixed quick."

Shakespeare and Klinkhammer join the al fresco fun on the Test

THE POWER of picnics is never to be underestimated. A good spread can turn a miserable, empty-bag fishing day into an altogether more jolly affair.

Although I cannot drink more than a few warming drops - my casting goes to pieces and then I have to nap - a good slug of Speyside malt helps along the memory of lost fish. "Oh! He was a fighter. He broke me and I had a 45-pound breaking line on! Biggest fish I've seen. Big as our Mary..."

Always remember to splash a few drops of whisky into the water for the fish. They like it. It was a particularly splendid picnic that I had laid before me a few Fridays ago, on the Compton Manor beat of the Test at King's Sombourne. In a hamper, with proper cutlery, china plates and enormous linen napkins. What? Yes, yes. We'll get to the fishing in a minute. There was asparagus, salad, fresh bread, cheese, biscuits, finger sandwiches (smoked salmon, egg mayo, goodness knows what else) with all the crusts cut off, water (sparkling and still) and a flask of coffee. This last addition is particularly handy for me as I am known for my love of afternoon, after-lunch naps.

There would have been wine too except, for the aforementioned

ANNALISA
BARBIERI
ON FISHING



tioned reasons, I had said no to the chef at Lainston House who had prepared this stonkingly fine hamper of goodies. For pudding there was a bowl of ripe summer berries with a generous dollop of thick, crusty clotted cream. How the other fisherfolk stared at us in envy!

Now the fishing. Regular readers of this column will know that I am not the Test's biggest fan. This is because, although it may have been the world's finest chalkstream once, I do not agree with the porky-fat trout the Test is stocked with, just to make corporate days out more fun.

The Test is, however, very beautiful, and this stretch is glorious. There's a bit of everything here, slow water, fast water, a weir, easy and more difficult bits to fish. On this particular beat there is no catch and release allowed so after catching your limit (three

brace) you have to get that fly out of the water. We met one old gentleman who was happily fishing away with a Royal Wulff (a very popular fly on this river), but without much success. A few weeks before, Oliver Edwards had suggested using a Klinkhammer on the Test, and it had been a big success. So, I suggested that this nice old gent try one. "Never heard of it," he said, so I gave him one of mine and, 10 minutes later, I saw him up river, his rod bent into the sort of arc that makes fishermen smile from ear to ear. He waved as he got his fish in, a very big brownie.

I had got a new rod that day for my imminent birthday. My fishing buddy, Pete, had given me a Shakespeare Expedition Fly. A four-piece, nine-foot rod that is ideal for travelling. This was most welcome as I had been eyeing his Expedition Fly

for some time. But before I could set to work I had to have just one bread roll, for energy of course. I had to do this in secret as I am always teased for eating all the picnic before I've even set up my rod. As if!

A new rod always takes a bit of getting used to, and just as I was casting like a beginner, the bailiff came along. So I had to draw my line in and pretend I had some urgent leader maintenance to attend to. When he was safely out of the way, I perfected my casting and put on a Parachute Black Gnat. Like someone who has been married too long and always has sex in the same way, I have become rather boring with my choice of fly. I am obsessed with Para Black Gnats. They always work for me. If I run out, I get a panic on because no other fly has so far been as successful for me in the summer months.

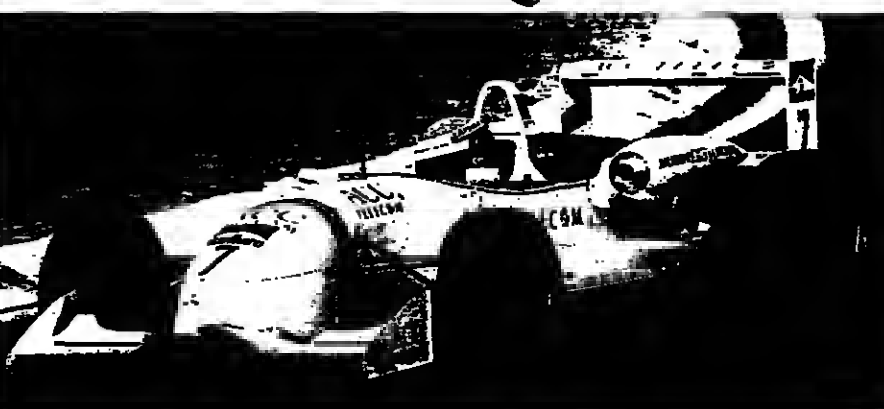
This day was to be the most prolific fishing day of my career. Nearly every time I cast I raised and hooked a fish. Not trout, which was a shame as I began to get fixated with the idea of catching a big brownie, despite what I have said before about having no interest in these porkers. They were all grayling. In January, I had fished the Test for grayling with no success and now I

could not stop catching them. There is no limit to the amount of grayling you can catch here, because these beautiful silver fish are considered to be pests. They are not stocked but just grow wild which, for me, makes them very precious.

However, after a while, I began to hate grayling. After banging five on the head, I released any others I caught. One can only eat so many. My obsession with catching a trout grew. Pete (two big fat brownies under his belt) even had to call me to have lunch. At 5pm he had to drag me off the river bank as I kept putting my new rod away, only to get it out again when I saw a trout rise. In the end, only the lure of a vodka and tonic made me leave.

Lainston House can arrange for its guests to fish this stretch at a cost of £130 per rod, per day, which is very reasonable for the push of old Test. It is only possible to do this on a Friday as the other days of the week a syndicate has use of it. This is a particularly good treat; you can have a fine day's fishing, collapse into a jecuzzed, drink champagne and sleep in a four-poster bed and dream of fish. The season ends on 9 October and reopens in late April. I thoroughly recommend it. And the picnic. For details telephone 01262 883 588.

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As a sponsor of Paul Stewart Racing, ACC Telecom is pleased to offer one lucky reader and friend a unique prize to attend a special open day at Paul Stewart Racing's state-of-the-art headquarters in Milton Keynes. This prize includes a tour of the facilities, viewing workshops of the team's highly successful Formula Three and Formula Opel teams as well as those of sister company, Stewart Grand Prix. Following a buffet lunch the winners will enter a go-karting Grand Prix at Silverstone where they will meet the Paul Stewart Racing drivers. The open day is on October 22nd and ACC Telecom has agreed to pay for a second class rail fare or mileage at 20p per mile to Milton Keynes for the winner and companion.

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Festival of racing: Regal trainer ready to extend dominance but Dettori will not be repeating his magnificent seven

Cumani lords it over Ascot Tabor can fly high at the circus

A very English Italian has come back from hard times thanks to sheer hard work.
By Richard Edmondson

THERE IS with Luca Cumani, as with his fellow trainer John Dunlop, a whiff of aristocracy. You half expect the Italian will, one day, take his place in an upper house, Lord Luca perhaps. His rivals might quite enjoy Cumani's elevation from their ranks, especially when they consider the Italian's record at the Ascot Festival, which opens today. Since this meeting became a Festival in 1987, the Newmarket-based trainer has saddled 16 winners, twice as many as his nearest challenger. In this arena, at least, he has looked regal.

Luca Matteo Cumani is, in fact, an ordinary Giuseppe who rather likes a spot of hard work. It is a tad disappointing when he tells you training is more about toil than magic. Some of us like to think there are sorcerers and horse whisperers out there, folk who blow down a colt's nostril once if they want it to win the 2,000 Guineas, one and a half times for the Derby. Apparently that's not quite so.

That's old-fashioned and it doesn't work like that," Cumani says crushingly. "It's a romantic view of life. [Training] is not a skill you're born with."

"I have an affinity for horses. I've loved them all my life and I think my horses like me. But when it comes to getting the best out of a horse it just doesn't happen one morning. It comes through a process of dedication, observation and work."

"Henry (Cecil) likes to give this impression that he floats around and doesn't care very much, but he works at least as hard as anyone else."

Cumani still carries vestiges of the Continent, even though he has spent more than half his 49 years within our shores. Some of him, though, is very English. He takes the *Times* and *Telegraph*, ensures guests are served with little pots of tea on arrival and stacks Shakespeare on his shelves. He would not be out of place on the fringe of a village green, putting down his warm beer to applaud a half-century from the blacksmith. "I like England, the English way of life and the civilisation of English culture," he says. "I'm very at home with it. I love the life."



Luca Cumani's flint-walled Bedford House yard is home to the Derby winner High-Rise

David Ashdown

Neither is Cumani free with his emotions. One of his countrymen has cornered that market after all. It has been reported that the trainer was crying after Barathra's Breeders' Cup Mile win at Churchill Downs four years ago. The very thought is preposterous. "I might have had a knot in my throat, but that would have been as far as it went," he says.

"I'm emotional, but Frankie (Dettori) does it just right and it goes better with his image. Tears and leaping around looks great on him, but it would look rather odd on me."

For all that, Continental chic keeps peeking out. Cumani could not be scruffy if he tried. When he twists that belt round his mac and draws artistically on a Merit cigarette, you can tell he's not from Dudley. And it must be said, he is not in the importance of image.

Our conversation was delayed as the great man went upstairs to shower and wash his hair. It was too unkempt for the photograph, he told reporter and cameraman. It was considerably better arranged than ours, agreed the same after he left the room.

With his sweaty jodhpurs in the laundry basket and fawn

slacks in their place, Cumani was happy to talk. He did, however, request that no photographic record be taken of the many ciggies he was smoking. That has become our little secret.

Our meeting took place in a sitting room at Bedford House (don't call it Bedford Lodge, which is the hotel next door, or you'll get an old-fashioned Don

horses as well as his own. This appeared rather appropriate lodgings then for the Cumani whose early career was characterised by thumping great wins in thumping great handicaps. Someone must have made quite a lot of money out of this. But it was not Luca. "Whether people believe it or not, I never bet," he says. "I'm not in it for the betting, I'm not

to Cardise it's going to be handicapped as if it's a bad one," he says. In the days when horses were handicapped after one win this proved a nice little ruse. Cumani much preferred it to another method of handicap management. "To do it by 'cheating' is too easy," he says. "There is no pleasure in doing that. I could not derive pleasure out of something that was far too easy. I need a challenge."

By the end of the 1980s Cumani had mastered handicaps. He'd mastered just about everything and, by his own admission, felt "invincible". He will never feel that way again.

A new wave of recession knocked at Bedford House and when the door was opened many of Cumani's American owners ran out and went home. The Aga Khan also decamped with his considerable string, and then Sheikh Mohammed felt his horses should be corralled further up the Bury Road at John Gosden's Stanley House. Four apocalypses had visited the Italian horseman. Numbers almost halved to 96. "My pride was hurt and I felt relegated," he says, "but the important thing was that we did

not lose sight of what we're here for. To produce winners and good horses."

"Any Tom, Dick or Harry can be dealt a lucky hand and win ordinary races with a good horse. The skill is coming up with as many top-class horses as you can. Top trainers produce top horses. No one starts with bluebloods. You have to start with ordinary horses and make them good."

Cumani is proud that his decline was not precipitous. He never dropped out of the top 10 and there was always a beast of distinction to represent the yard. Now he is back winning Derbys again, back feeding many mouths at Bedford House. "I'm very happy," he says. "This year I've had High-Rise and One So Wonderful and a decent enough supporting cast. But trainers are never entirely happy. A trainer who is wholly happy is a bit of a fool."

"You shouldn't have time to be happy, but just enough to consider where your next good horse might be coming from."

Crikey, you think as you step out into the sunlight and the flint-walled splendour of the Bedford House yards. He's got all this and he's still not satisfied. It might be worth having a horse with this chap.

Corleone look. There was an invitation to tiffin from the Countess of Halifax on the mantelpiece, the lower limb of some sorry beast hanging luck on a table top, and furniture you are careful not to touch. Money was in the air.

It is something of a surprise to learn that Cumani bought this whole shooting match for £75,000. It was the mid-1970s and also the middle of a recession (a later one was not to treat Cumani so kindly).

Bedford House was formerly associated with James Machel, a gambler who ventured large sums on other people's

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THEY USED the Frankie factor to sell the Ascot Festival last year. Twelve months on, the max factor is the focus.

Douglas Erskine-Crum, the Ascot racecourse director, and his cohorts, have organised a programme for this weekend designed to bring in the masses of the general public as well as the racing aficionado.

Ascot's theme this year is the celebration of the horse, which will involve exhibitions of the various labours devised for the noble beast down the ages to the moment when Anglo Saxon man considered his best use was as a betting medium.

There will be displays of mediaeval jousting, the appearance of Arabs, Exmoors and Cobs, as well as a demonstration by a Lipizzaner stallion trained at the Spanish Riding School.

A police horse will also attempt to jump through a makeshift wall to demonstrate trust with its rider. The Red Devils fly in, red-jowled media tipsters can get their faces painted and there will also be clowns. Amid this circus, horseracing will be taking place.

The Ascot Festival has not really needed much of a selling point since Frankie Dettori tackled into town two years ago. That was the meeting when the great showman recorded his magnificent seven.

The beauty of the achievement was that it was not posted, as Martin Pipe often tries to manage, with a volley of favourites at an uncompetitive up-country meeting. The Italian did it on one of the most eagerly fought cards in the calendar.

If the near-impossible is to happen again it certainly won't be by Dettori - he's not even in the first race. John Reid and Kieren Fallon are the only riders with a mount in each contest.

The centrepiece, the Queen Elizabeth II Stakes, usually confers the title of champion on its winner. That will not be so today as Godolphin's Intikhab does not step down from the throne to put his crown on the line. It remains, however, a compelling contest.

Michael Tabor is greedy for Group One prizes these days following a spectacular outlay and the owner is doubly represented here by Among Men and Second Empire. Confirmation of the latter's participation came only yesterday and continued a worrying pattern from his Baldyleyard. Running plans from Aidan O'Brien's stable are

BY RICHARD EDMONDSON

increasingly cloudy which discomforts ante-post bookmakers, the punters who wish to play with them and courses seeking to publicise their four-legged celebrities.

Second Empire became a runner after his daily blow-out yesterday and there will almost certainly be the same encouraging noises from connections about his prospects which have preceded other races this season. The bald, form-book truth, however, is that Second Empire has not been top-class this campaign.

Among Men is different. He has run in the best company this year, including outings against

RICHARD EDMONDSON
Nap: Among Men
(Ascot 3.20)
NB: Averti
(Ascot 2.35)

several of this afternoon's challengers. He has not beaten them by much, but he has beaten them consistently, and the sensible wagers is for AMONG MEN (nap 3.20) to do so again.

Dettori might still feel warm after the first encounter even though he has no part to play. Rahah (2.00) looks quite good here, particularly as he has good form with the St Leger winner, Nedawi. Victory for John Dunlop's colt would deliver a huge compliment to Sea Wave, Dettori's Arc mount, who humiliated him in the Great Voltigeur at York.

The Diadem Stakes will see lots of fast horses bearing down the Berkshire straight, including one that has not been quite fast enough this year. Averti (next best 2.35) was first past the post at Baden-Baden last time, but was disqualified. His connections were then beaten again, at an appeal, but all odds should be recovered if the seven-year-old maintains his end-of-season form.

And finally the fluffy pet story to go out with a smile may be carried off by an animal who has not endeared himself greatly to the human species this year. Gaele Storm (3.55) has been a regular Saturday-morning steamer without any recompense this summer and his consistent followers now probably exist under canvas. Today is the day to get the property back.

Yesterday's results, other cards, page 26

NOTTINGHAM

HYPERION

2.30 Sharp Fellow
3.00 Up And About
3.30 Alpina Panther
4.00 Gleaming Hill (nb)

GOING: Good to Firm.

STALLS: 5/- stands only; remainder - inside.

DRIVE ADVANTAGE: High best for 1st or 2nd.

Left-hand, oval course. Flat and galloping with easy turns. Run-in of 240yds.

Course is 2m 6f off B606 Nottingham station 2m. ADMISSION: Club £4 (Ladies, 25c; Youth, 10c; Children, 5c; 10-21 years, 50c; Silver Ring & Red dock £3. CAR PARK: Silver Ring £12 (admits car plus four occupants, free time free).

LEADING TRAINERS: J. Dunlop 22-41 (68%), H. Cecil 16-42 (25%), M. Bell 12-43 (42%), Sir M. Prescott 11-43 (25%), J. P. Farnham 11-43 (25%).

LEADING JOCKEYS: G. Duffield 10-42 (53%), T. Sprague 10-41 (75%), J. Quinn 10-75 (85%), Paul Eddery 11-72 (53%), G. Carter 10-52 (52%), A. Cullen 9-54 (85%).

PAYOUTS: 2.30 10-42 (53%), 3.00 10-42 (52%), 3.30 10-42 (52%), 4.00 10-42 (52%).

BUNKERED FIRST TIME: Colin Hurrey (veteran, 230), O' Higgins (veteran, 230), Sugar Dimes (veteran, 230), Just Witz (veteran, 500).

2.30 MRS SWANN JOHAL BIRTHDAY SELLING HANDICAP (CLASS B) £2,500 added 3YO 1m Penalty Value £2,775

1. 40040 ABUNDANCE (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

2. 40030 COOLIN RIVER (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

3. 40020 ROYALTY (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

4. 40010 BERTIE'S GIFT (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

5. 40000 CATFISH (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

6. 39990 SUNDAY (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

7. 39880 STARLINER (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

8. 39770 FRANK CLARK (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

9. 39660 PURVIS (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

10. 39550 DUNNOY (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

11. 39440 HIGH GAIN (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

12. 39330 SMOOTY PRINCE (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

13. 39220 HERRIS (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

14. 39110 SHARP FELLOW (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

15. 39000 SHARP FELLOW (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

16. 38890 SHARP FELLOW (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

17. 38780 SHARP FELLOW (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

18. 38670 SHARP FELLOW (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

19. 38560 SHARP FELLOW (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

20. 38450 SHARP FELLOW (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

21. 38340 SHARP FELLOW (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

22. 38230 SHARP FELLOW (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

23. 38120 SHARP FELLOW (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

24. 38010 SHARP FELLOW (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

25. 37900 SHARP FELLOW (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

26. 37790 SHARP FELLOW (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

27. 37680 SHARP FELLOW (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

28. 37570 SHARP FELLOW (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

29. 37460 SHARP FELLOW (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

30. 37350 SHARP FELLOW (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

31. 37240 SHARP FELLOW (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

32. 37130 SHARP FELLOW (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

33. 37020 SHARP FELLOW (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

34. 36910 SHARP FELLOW (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

35. 36800 SHARP FELLOW (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

36. 36690 SHARP FELLOW (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

37. 36580 SHARP FELLOW (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

38. 36470 SHARP FELLOW (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

39. 36360 SHARP FELLOW (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

40. 36250 SHARP FELLOW (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

41. 36140 SHARP FELLOW (2) (P. J. P. Ryan) 10-42 (53%) T. Sprague 13 105

42.

Pay-per-view coverage: New technology enables big clubs to cash in as their fans brace themselves for the inevitable



A crowd of 70,000 interested onlookers at Wembley observes as a cameraman films Manchester United's Ryan Giggs taking a corner, the kind of personalised shot that digital TV viewers will be able to access David Ashdown

Football charging into digital age

IT HAD it well but, when the BBC covered Chelsea's European Cup-Winners' Cup final last May, it wanted them to lose. Nothing personal, just that the deal had already been struck. If Chelsea won, Channel 5 would cover their defence of the trophy this season; if they lost, and thus went into the UEFA Cup, the BBC would follow the campaign.

Chelsea won and Channel 5's first reward was a figure of 2.8m viewers for their first-leg tie with Helsingborg last week. Not a huge figure compared to ITV's 8.2m audience for Manchester United versus Barcelona the following night, but more than double the fledgling channel's usual evening ratings. Next week Channel 5 follows up with European ties involving Aston Villa, Liverpool and Newcastle. Next month it has England's match in Luxembourg.

Like BSkyB, whose success owes much to Premiership football, Channel 5 is, to quote Rupert Murdoch's phrase, using sport "as a battering ram". The channel's record audience is 5m, for England's match in Poland shortly after its April 1997 launch. It paid a reported £1m, then way over the going rate, but it was money well spent as it persuaded more people to get their sets returned to receive the channel than any number of poster advertisements.

Football is clearly good for television, but is television good for football? That depends. For the top players and clubs the impact is almost entirely beneficial as income rockets, taking wages with it. For the rest the consequences are at best mixed, at worst catastrophic.

Either way the future is pay-per-view, through the medium of digital television, and it is imminent. On Tuesday the Na-

BY GLENN MOORE

tionwide League said it would experiment with pay-per-view matches after Christmas. On Wednesday the BBC launched its digital service, with BSkyB following suit next Thursday. Digital has the potential to show every match from every division, but already there are signs that the market is becoming saturated. Next week 11 live matches are available to English audiences in five days, taking the September total to 36. Even Gordon Taylor, the chief executive of the Profes-

sional Footballers' Association, has said: "I sometimes think 'not football again'." Sky's audience of 1.53m for Sunday's Arsenal v Manchester United match looks alarming given that the same fixture last November pulled in 2.86m, still Sky's best Premiership audience. Sunday's hot weather was a factor but a senior figure within the company said he fears the "glut of football, particularly additional terrestrial games, is a factor".

Yet this year's average (1.23m before Thursday's game) is only slightly down on the figure for last autumn and audiences are expected to rise as the season progresses. In a fragmenting market, football remains value for money to broadcasters, although

Sky admits it is "seeing more discrimination" from viewers.

It is not only TV audiences who are becoming selective; so is the paying punter. While Sky Sports' limited reach (4m subscribers) helps gates hold up well, matches for which season ticket holders have to pay, such as cup ties and European matches, can be seriously affected by terrestrial TV. Last week Blackburn, and Chelsea had very poor gates for European ties, as did Newcastle, whose tie - though not nationally available - pulled in 550,000 viewers on Tyne-Tees.

Sheila Spiers, the vice-chair of the Football Supporters' Association and a Liverpool fan, admitted her team's match next week against Kosice: "We're 3-

0 up so I'm not likely to pay £18 for a ticket if I can watch it on television for nothing. There was once talk that television income would mean a drop in admission prices but there is no sign of that happening yet. If pay-per-view comes, everyone should get in for nothing: we are the extras in the extravaganza."

It is not just the televised clubs which are affected. Few Nationwide League clubs like competing with Manchester United in Europe, and 19 Saturday fixtures on 10 October have been moved to avoid clashing with Sky's coverage of England's European Championship match with Bulgaria.

The FSA, added Spiers, is "totally against pay-per-view but believe it is inevitable".

This intransigent view may seem blinkered as there will be occasions, when matches are sold out or supporters are unable to get to a game, when pay-per-view will benefit fans. It is based, however, on the long-term view that it will be bad for supporters especially if, as is mooted, the bulk of the Premiership programme is moved to Sunday, a notoriously difficult time for travelling fans. It is also seen as likely to accelerate the gap between clubs. "It is all about income," Spiers said. "The elite clubs will benefit and the big clubs get bigger."

There are signs of this on the continent, where pay-per-view is already under way and picking up after a slow start, in which a Dutch attempt failed and

an Italian service stalled. Spain, where the pay-per-view channel had 1.4m "match buys" at £2.50 last season, is the biggest success, while Italy now has 120,000 regular viewers at £2.50 a game. The Italian experience is ominous. The big four clubs (Juventus, Milan, Internazionale and relegated but well-supported Napoli) have tired of sharing revenue largely generated by themselves and this year signed their own deal, bringing them an increased share and provoking an ongoing dispute.

This is likely to be replicated here, especially if the Office of Fair Trading wins its case contesting the Premier League's right to negotiate television deals "collectively". The case comes up in January and the in-

duction is that the OFT may win, though the delaying effects of an appeal, or a compromise solution, should ensure the current deal survives through to 2001.

After that it would be a free-for-all, with clubs like Manchester United able to restrict their home matches to subscribers or sell to the highest bidder. Less well-supported teams would be reduced to making what they can from the visit of bigger clubs. As for the lower divisions, how many people would pay to watch Halifax against Hartlepool, broadcast by Sky this month under their obligation to show a dozen lower division matches a season? Even if it was shown on pay-per-view, it would not earn much.

Meanwhile, in the United States, the heart of capitalism has socialist sport, with all teams in the NFL sharing income - not just TV but even merchandising. That is inconceivable here but, notes the author and analyst Alex Fynn, "even the biggest clubs need other teams to play against".

At least those supporters unable - or unwilling - to meet pay-per-view prices can listen to matches on the radio. Can't they? Not necessarily. Digital radio has the same potential as TV and the BBC has already broadcast an entire Premiership programme simultaneously. While the BBC is committed to "free-to-air" programming, commercial stations are not and, increasingly, are outbidding the BBC for radio rights - Talk Radio is covering Manchester United's Champions' League games.

While there are no plans as yet to encrypt signals so that radio goes pay-per-view, the potential is there. The future could be a case of, to paraphrase Timothy Leary, "tune in, turn on, pay up - or drop out".

THE PAST

A BRIEF HISTORY OF TELEVIEWED FOOTBALL

1936
Television cameras record Arsenal v Everton fixture.

1937
First live broadcast: Arsenal v Arsenal reserves.

1938
First live FA Cup final: Preston 1 Huddersfield 0, 10,000 watch.

1964
Match of the Day starts on BBC2 with Liverpool v Arsenal (3-2). It is quickly poached by BBC1, but moved from early evening to late night.

1970s
Highlights programmes, Match of the Day, Sportsnight (BBC) and The Big Match (ITV), rule.

1979
ITV attempts "Snatch of the Day" with exclusive bid, but High Court rules against. Joint highlights coverage, at £2.05m pa, continues.

1983
First live league football, BBC/ITV show five games each for combined £2.6m pa.

THE PRESENT

THIS MONTH'S LIVE TELEVIEWED FOOTBALL

Date	Fixture	Channel	Aud	Aud. est. 97/98
4 Sept	Halifax v Hartlepool	Sky Sports 2	3,820	2,541
5	Sunderland v England	Sky Sports 2	36,000	n/a
5	Walsley v Scotland	Channel 5	4,500	n/a
5	Walsley v Italy	ITV	23,160	37,000
6	Oxford v Portsmouth	Sky Sports 2	6,626	7,500
8	Sunderland v Bristol City	Sky Sports 2	34,111	34,468
9	Chelsea v Arsenal	Sky Sports 1	36,644	33,387
11	Tranmere v Huddersfield	Sky Sports 2	5,770	8,000
13	Spurs v Middlesbrough	Sky Sports 1	30,427	29,143
13	Norwich v Rotherham	Sky Sports 2	16,919	14,445
13	Parma v Juventus	Channel 4	4,500	n/a
13	Blackburn v Lyons	BBC1	13,846	25,252
15	Kosice v Liverpool	Channel 5	4,500	n/a
15	Norhampton v St Pauli	Sky Sports 2	7,254	6,332
15	Walsley v Leeds United	ITV	n/a	n/a
16	Man Utd v Barcelona	ITV	53,601	55,164
16	Man Utd v Arsenal	Carlton Select	36,000	n/a
17	Chelsea v Huddersfield	Channel 5	17,714	33,387
17	Newcastle v P. B. Grady	ITV	26,599	36,671
17	Leeds v Southampton	Eurosport	n/a	n/a
18	Walsley v Notts County	Sky Sports 2	3,991	4,063
20	Arsenal v Man Utd	Sky Sports 1	38,142	38,053
20	West Brom v Bradford	Sky Sports 2	12,426	16,692
20	Sheff Wed v Celtic	Sky Sports 3	50,026	49,076
20	Salernitana v Milan	Channel 4	n/a	n/a
21	Blackburn v Chelsea	Sky Sports 1	23,113	25,252
22	West Ham v Northampton	Sky Sports 2	25,435	25,075
24	Man Utd v Liverpool	Sky Sports 1	55,181	55,164

* Wales v Italy was played at Anfield, Liverpool. Comparative attendance is from Wales v Netherlands, Cardiff Arms Park, Oct 1996.

† Not available nationally

Research: Sam Wallace

THE TECHNOLOGY

DIGITAL/PAY-PER-VIEW: HOW IT WORKS

You get home late to find the match is already 1-1. No problem, press a button and the goals are instantly flashed up to see.

That is one of the facilities Pay-Per-View will bring to armchair viewers. They will also be able to choose their own camera angle and order replays on demand.

None of this will be available immediately but interactive TV is not far away. Viewers in France can already watch one match and be alerted to goals elsewhere in time to switch over to see the replay.

This is possible through the development of Digital television which, together with PPV, will revolutionise televised football. Digital means a vast expansion in capacity allowing 40-odd terrestrial channels and hundreds on satellite and cable. For football this means dozens of matches could be televised simultaneously. Most of these would have to be paid for. In the short term Sky insists it will only put matches on PPV which are additional to the present contract - which expires in summer 2001 - though this may alter if the Office of Fair Trading wins its case against the Premier League and voids the deal.

Sky will face competition from OnDigital, which is backed by Carlton and Granada, and the BBC.

The BBC began broadcasting its Choice channel, which includes original football magazine shows, this week, but only industry insiders will be able to receive it until 1 October when Sky will provide both programming and the satellite platform, launch. Digital on cable arrives next year.

To receive Digital you will need a decoder, sold by Sky at a heavily subsidised £199 (£159 to current subscribers). Sky's PPV programmes will only be accessible to viewers with a Sky subscription (minimum £5.99 a month).

It is anticipated that 200,000 homes will have digital within a year, and more than 10m within 10 years.

Digital Radio, which is already available, provides greater clarity of sound as well as choice, but the equipment is far more expensive: £500-£1,000 a set and only available for in-car format at present. Home tuners, which could be ready by January, will start at £799, but prices for both types should drop sharply.

FA rejects manager's red card for referees

BY ALAN NIXON

Evans' response. "Don said, 'I have not seen any criticism by Evans of his players. I felt that Steve Lodge had a good game and that the eight cautions were justified'."

Liverpool are switching their search for a defender to the 5m-rated Swede, Patrik Andersson, of Borussia Mönchengladbach, and are prepared for an exchange deal involving their unwanted striker, Sean Dundee.

George Graham will be given £18m to transform Tottenham's fortunes if he becomes manager, according to David Pleat, Spurs' director of football who is looking after team affairs.

"We have resisted buying mediocrity and it is a great challenge for somebody," he said. "The club needs three quality players, of course we do. If we buy two or three top players for about £18m we can become a top six club again. The new manager will have that money available."

Pleat also said that Graham's

appointment, if it happens, must be done by the book or not at all. "I am part of the League Managers' Association and we have been concerned recently about players who are so financially secure that they have threatened to withdraw their labour. Therefore it is important that we be seen as managers to be doing the right thing."

The FA president, Sepp Blatter, warned yesterday that clubs who sign up for a proposed breakaway Super League will be suspended from domestic and European competitions. Fifa, world football's governing body, will ask any offender's national federation to suspend them, thereby preventing them from playing in their national league or any European competition.

The chairman of Sheffield United, Mike McDonald, called on Fifa yesterday to punish Benfica for not paying the transfer fee on Brian Deane, who signed for the Portuguese side in January.

The Wolverhampton winger,

Steve Froggatt, is having talks with Middlesbrough despite having agreed terms with Coventry. He had been close to joining the Sky Blues yesterday in time for today's trip to Charlton after Wolves accepted £2m bids from both clubs.

Ron Atkinson has hit back at the Aston Villa chairman, Doug Ellis, for claiming in his autobiography that Atkinson cost the club the chance to sign Andy Cole five years ago. Atkinson, launching his own autobiography, said: "I would back my recall on footballing matters against anyone's and I do not ever remember us ever wanting to sign Andy Cole while I was at Villa. It sounds deadly distorted to me."

Evans: "Sick" of referees

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Diamond geezer strikes gold

JUST OVER six years old and life is looking pretty good for Rushden & Diamonds. Promotion twice in our short lifetime leaves us now just one step short of Football League status.

The club was formed at the end of the 1991-92 season when Rushden Town and Irthlingborough Diamonds joined forces. A local businessman, Max Griggs of Dr Martens fame, was one of the men behind the merger and he has financed the club heavily over the past few seasons. It is rare that someone can build a football club and make it such an outstanding success after inheriting two local sides with uncertain futures, but this is what Max and his fellow directors have achieved.

Nene Park stadium is often compared to a miniature Old Trafford and the facilities are not usually found outside the Second Division of the Football League. It comes complete with an electronic scoreboard and covered stands on all four sides.

The club, in its third season

in the Conference, has had a chequered history in this division. In 1996-97 it was the time of appointment of Brian Talbot (formerly of Arsenal and Ipswich Town) as head coach

FAN'S EYE VIEW

RUSHDEN & DIAMONDS

BY MARTIN CHURCH

which coincided with five straight league victories and 12th position after looking like relegation candidates for much of the campaign. Last season we started poorly again, losing the first three matches but rallying to become the main challengers to Halifax. However, due to injuries to key players we finished fourth. This season began with seven straight league victories, but we have been jinxed over the past two

matches, with minutes to go. Last Saturday, away at Doncaster, an injury-time equaliser by Hume saw two points dropped, while on Tuesday night at Leek Town, a chemical fire at a neighbouring factory resulted in the game being abandoned after 85 minutes with the score 1-0 to Diamonds. Today sees Diamonds at home to Hereford United.

Many of the supporters have either supported Irthlingborough Diamonds for years, or have stood on the terraces cheering Rushden Town at their old Hayden Road ground. One thing is for sure, though: Diamonds are now gathering support from disillusioned League club fans and have people travelling to home games who up until recently may have been regulars at Tuffenham.

The fans are buzzing with anticipation this season and it's not unusual for more than 500 of them to travel to away games. One thing you won't find is complacency, though: after leading the Beazer

Homes Premier League by 13 points in February 1996 we eventually won the championship by two points.

So what of the squad? Although most people will have heard of the evergreen Chris Whyte (ex-Arsenal and Leeds) and Colin West (ex-Sheffield Wednesday and Sunderland), there are others who deserve special praise. Darren Collins and Gary Butterworth (two of the best players to have graced the Conference, while Darren Bradshaw, Caryl Van Der Valden, Adrian Foster, Tim Wooding and Jon Brady always put in consistent performances.

For Foster the game against Hereford today will be extra special. He used to play for them, and after the back-racking he received from their supporters last season, his name on the scoresheet would be poetic justice.

Finally, the one question we are often asked: is this the season when Diamonds will make it to the Football League? The answer to that is simple - maybe!

Week

Charlton v Coventry

Chelsea v Middlesbrough

Everton v Blackburn

Newcastle v Nottm Forest

and Eyal Berkovic, Stan Lazaridis and Neil Hindcock are also fit and available, but Steve Lomas, John Moncur and John Hartson are still at least a week away from first-team action.

INJURED: Stuart Pearce, Michael Owen, Tony Stewart, Eyal Berkovic, Lazaridis, Lomas, Lush, Nicky Wright, Paul Robinson, Omerhan Hodge.

SOUTHAMPTON (From): Squid to be confirmed.

INJURED: West Ham: Lomas, Moncur, Hartson. Southampton: Hirst, Beresford.

SQUAD: West Ham: None. Southampton: None.



SPORT



THE NURSES WHO SAVED BUSBY P22 • CUMANI THE KING OF ASCOT P24

Graham on shifting ground

THE MAN who brought you "Boring, Boring Arsenal" and the club who gave us "Glory, Glory Hallelujah" may soon become an item. But before prompting any sardonic choruses of "One-nil to the Tottenham", George Graham must first jilt Leeds United, making him likely to incur the displeasure of both sets of fans at White Hart Lane today.

BY PHIL SHAW

Skinner or the Vatican vying for Ian Paisley. Since their Leeds counterparts have waited in vain for an assurance from their manager that he will honour his contract, Graham's walk to the dug-out promises to provoke a noisy response. Sustained hostility from the home supporters might even persuade him that the cannon and the cockered really are incompatible, and that he would be better off at Elland Road.

Even by the chequered standards encapsulated in the title of his autobiography, *The Glory and the Grief*, Graham is in a

peculiar position. He has spent the week preparing Leeds to exploit the very weaknesses which Sugar, in a kind of a foolhardy Faustian pact, hopes he will shortly begin to rectify. What effect the uncertainty might have on the players remains to be seen. David Ginola, most obviously, may wonder whether he would have a future under a manager who set the tone for his previous sojourn in north London by replacing Charlie Nicholas with Perry Groves' more prosaic attributes.

Leeds, meanwhile, find themselves in the psychologically anomalous situation of knowing that the cause Graham will be

to which he appears reluctant to commit himself. Scarcely propitious circumstances in which to approach a European tie as finely balanced as Tuesday's against Maritima in Madeira.

Aston Villa will be in Norway that night, also defending a one-goal advantage in the UEFA Cup. Should they avoid defeat at home to Derby, in a fixture which pits the Premiership pacemakers against the club lying second, they will travel having equalled their best post-war start. A year after enduring the worst opening sequence in their history, four defeats, they are undefeated in six.

The curious aspect is that

Villa's run - bettered only by the clean-and-blue class of 25 years ago in the old Second Division - has been achieved by largely the same group of players. The striking difference is that the manager who has effected the transformation, John Gregory, looked on from Wycombe during last autumn's woes.

Derby, one of Gregory's clubs as a player, are also unbeaten. Victory would see them scale the summit for the first time since 1975, when Dave Mackay's Rams were defending the title. Jim Smith, who likes to balance his Yorkshire pragmatism with a dash of panache in his teams, admits: "I'm truly starting to dream."

Smith's first love, Sheffield Wednesday, receive Arsenal after a wretched week. As if the public washing of dirty linen by Danny Wilson and Paolo Di Canio were not damaging enough - the manager questioning the commitment of foreign fancy men, the Italian doubting his accuser's maturity - Wednesday went out of the Worthington Cup to Third Division Cambridge United.

The time appears right for Arsenal to claim their first away success since April, when they beat a Barnsley outfit managed by Wilson. Yet they traditionally are poorly at Hillsborough, winning just once in the past 14 visits, and need to

demonstrate ahead of their next Champions' League game that Sunday's rout of Manchester United was not merely a case of being "up" for a big game.

While it is a little early to talk about relegation six-pointers, the meeting of Everton and Blackburn finds both teams and their managers desperately seeking three points. Walter Smith still awaits his first home League win or goal since arriving from Rangers; Roy Hodgson's Rovers are in the bottom three, weeks after he was touted as a possible coach for both England and Germany.

Everton have won the previous four meetings at Good-

son Park. However, the card count looks likely to exceed the goal tally today. In the only table they are likely to top this season, Smith's new charges lead with 18 yellows and one red, closely pursued by Blackburn on 15 and one respectively.

By coincidence, among other Premiership statistics is one revealing that the teams who have hit the woodwork most times are Tottenham (four) and Leeds (three). Oh, and the side caught offside more than anyone else are Sheffield Wednesday, so expect Arsenal's back line to indulge in a spot of formation arm-raising to gladden the heart of Spurs' manager-in-waiting.



Mika Hakkinen, the McLaren-Mercedes driver, adjusts his helmet before recording the leading practice time at the Nürburgring yesterday. Roland Wehrhuth/AP

Palace game's 100m TV fans

UNLIKELY THOUGH it sounds, Crystal Palace's First Division meeting with Sheffield United tomorrow will be the most eagerly anticipated football match in the world this weekend. The game will be the first English league game to be broadcast on live national television in China and the spectacle is forecast to draw an audience of more than 100 million people.

This historic occasion is due to one man, Fan Zhiyi, who as well as being the captain of the Chinese national side, also happens to be a Palace defender. His move to the south London club in the summer - along with compatriot and fellow defender Sun Jihai - has prompted a meteoric rise in demand for the English game in his home country.

It is not unusual for Nationwide League games to be broadcast internationally - CSI Ltd, the League's rights distributor, regularly sells matches to Malaysia, Australia, South Africa, Israel, New Zealand, Singapore and the Middle East - but the move into China is extraordinary for its enormous earning potential. Neither the League nor CSI would disclose how much they will be paid for the rights to the game, but one Chinese journalist in London said: "It was very expensive." The revenues the League receives from international rights sales are

BY NICK HARRIS

distributed between all its 72 member clubs. "It's an agreement for the benefit of the League as a whole," a spokesman said.

The match will be screened by two stations, Chinese Central TV (a subscriber channel) and Shanghai cable, which operates on a pay-per-view basis.

The future possibilities for broadcasters appear to be huge, as the Japanese striker Hidetoshi Nakata's move to Perugia in Italy has already shown. Solely on the basis of Nakata's move, Perugia have secured a multi-million pound contract to have their games broadcast in Asia for six years.

Tomorrow's game is not likely to break all-time viewing figures in China - popular entertainment shows can attract 200m people - but Fan's involvement has certainly created a stir. "He is a household name," said Zhou Jie, a sportswriter with the Xinhua Chinese News Agency. "When you talk about soccer to a Chinese person, there is no one who doesn't know who he is."

"Before they [Fan and Sun] joined, Crystal Palace was not so popular in China, but since everyone knows them, Crystal Palace have surpassed Manchester United and Aston Villa." If only the Eagles could fly so high on the pitch.

Hakkinen leads in war of words

MIKA HAKKINEN'S last word on the matter was delivered with feeling and lifted him clear at the top of the time sheet while Michael Schumacher was muted fourth.

Friday's practice is not necessarily a guide to events that unfold in the race, but it doubtless made the Finn and his McLaren-Mercedes team feel a mile better. Hakkinen's teammate, David Coulthard, toed the McLaren party line, maintain-

MOTOR RACING
BY DERICK ALLSOP
at the Nürburgring

ing Hakkinen had the mental strength as well as the driving ability to come through the test. For good measure, the Scot suggested that Schumacher was becoming more prone to errors, and perhaps showing his age.

Norbert Haug, head of the

Mercedes Formula One operation, echoed the support for Hakkinen and called on all concerned to create a fitting finale to the season, and avoid any repetition of last year's scenario when Schumacher's ill-fated collision with Jacques Villeneuve confirmed the Canadian as champion.

In the Ferrari camp, however, they were unmoved. For a start, they said, they had no desire to use fresh tyres for the

sake of a quick time at the end of the practice session, and as for pointing the finger at them and contending that Hakkinen would not buckle: "Beh!"

The psychological warfare was rampant as McLaren and Ferrari sparred ahead of tomorrow's Luxembourg Grand Prix, the penultimate round of the championship. Hakkinen holds the advantage only by virtue of second place count-back, but he will be champion

if he wins this race and Schumacher fails to score.

The German, however, is on a roll, having wiped out Hakkinen's 16-point lead in three races. Yet Coulthard vehemently argues the case for his team and partner.

"I am confident we still have the best car and it's a question of making it work," Coulthard said. "I can understand why people think Michael is tougher than Mika. But Michael has had more incidents and he always says it's the other guy's fault."

"I don't believe Mika will give an inch because he wants the championship and if it comes down to the last corner, he won't be found wanting. I think Mika deserves to win the championship. His race wins have been very clean. Not all Michael's have. His win in Argentina, for instance, was not sporting. Given this is a sport, may the best sportsman win."

As a final dig, Coulthard added: "Michael appears to have made more mistakes this year. Whether he is getting older or closer to the edge I don't know." Schumacher, of course, has an enormous following, but Mercedes also lay claim to home ground and Haug's crew are under pressure to provide the reliability as well as the pace to undermine their compatriot's aspirations.

"Last year's finish in the championship was not good for Formula One but it was not good for Schumacher either," Haug said. "Nobody can afford that. It is not our way to go motor racing."

"But nobody should think we are the pussycats of the starting grid. We are sharp and we are fighting, and there is no

doubt we can attack as well. But I do not want to see wheel banging or stuff like that."

Haug, too, is confident Hakkinen has the mental courage of his convictions: "Who is qualified to say Mika can't stand pressure as well as Michael? If you are confident you don't make a noise about it."

The noises, however, have been emanating from both teams and Eddie Irvine, the ever-dutiful No 2 to Schumacher, had no compunction about extending his responsibilities for supporting Schumacher beyond the race circuit. "There's no way Mika is mentally tougher than Michael," Irvine said. "For sure Hakkinen will crack under the pressure. Michael knows he will have another shot at it if he doesn't get it this time. Mika knows this might be his only shot at it, and that creates the pressure."

Irvine is adamant he would never resort to foul means to help Schumacher and resents the suggestion that Ferrari have cheated to make their car more competitive: "I wouldn't take anybody off even if asked. As for McLaren saying we've cheated, they must be mad. If we've been cheating, how come their car is still faster?"

Irvine, too, had a closing barb for the opposition: "If Coulthard had given way and helped Hakkinen more often, as I've helped Michael, Hakkinen would be champion already."

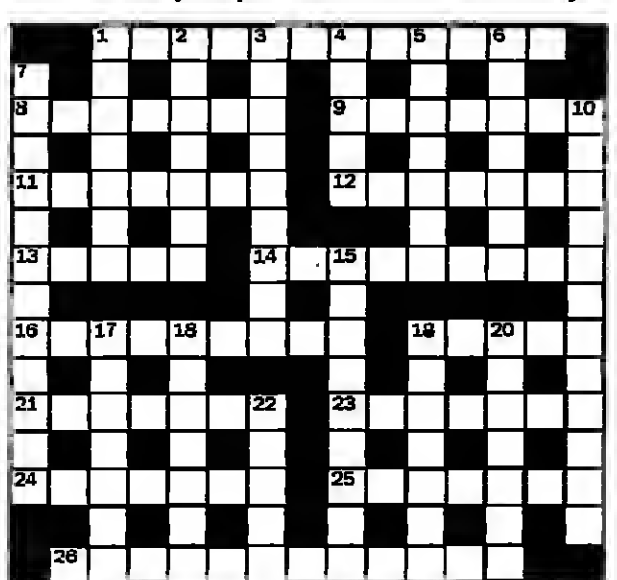
Stewart-Ford have confirmed that Rubens Barrichello would be staying with the team next season as partner to Britain's Johnny Herbert.

Practice times, Digest, page 27

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

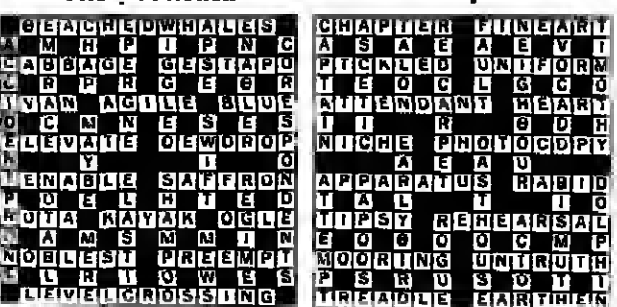
No. 3726, Saturday 26 September

By Phil



Friday's solution

Last Saturday's solution



ACROSS

- 1 One can go off warning people about crime (7, 5)
- 8 Fellow in Tosca forgetting second piece of music (7)
- 9 Living material - fish - found around UK island (7)
- 11 Growing stuff up to the time of maturity (7)
- 12 Disease ravaged holiday area (7)
- 13 Satirist not wasting a moment (6)
- 14 Government official shoots male in Arab country (9)
- 16 A couple of years to hiring about arrangement of dearest Beatles' song (8)
- 19 Leading newsmen backed store (5)
- 21 Greatly wanted nothing planted in part of the garden (7)
- 23 Pasta recipe: small helping of vermicelli in mayonnaise (7)
- 24 Student is a bit supple (7)
- 25 Attractive, but not fine, piece of art (7)
- 26 Dancing of daisies, yet with the concealment of attractive features! (5, 7)

DOWN

- 1 Germs mostly returned: I may get sick, upset (7)
- 2 To make a further change to study's appropriate (7)
- 3 Describing some property with nasty holes in the front (8)
- 4 Investigates losing Prince's clothes (5)
- 5 Chap guided round on a run (7)
- 6 Accurate reproduction is obtained in some area (7)
- 7 Slob must stay untidy - it's the mark of the class (5, 5)
- 10 Hallucinating even when blindfolded (6, 6)
- 15 Lover active in bed for you, initially (9)
- 17 Liaises with difficulty in part of Germany (7)
- 18 I love being wrapped in the tails of Venus - that should make you jealous (7)
- 19 Implements dire heartless crimes (7)
- 20 Rectitude and compassion, accepting what thief may do (7)
- 22 Imagine English being captured by Scotch (5)

The first five correct solutions to this week's puzzle opened next Thursday receive instant copies of the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations. Answers and winners' names will be published next Saturday. Send solutions to Saturday Crossword, P.O. Box 4018, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5BL. Please use the box number and postcode and give your own puzzle. Last week's winners: P. Terry, Widdowham; P. Hargreaves, Bristol; R. Boulton, Faversham; T. Corlett, Pinner; N. Lipp, Bury St. Edmunds.

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WEEKEND REVIEW

COMMENT ARTS & BOOKS • COUNTRY & GARDEN • TRAVEL

MY CULTURE, RIGHT OR WRONG

STEPHEN BAYLEY, PAGE 7

THE ULTIMATE GERSHWIN COLLECTION

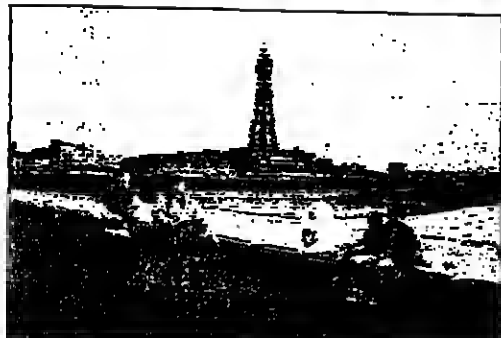
ARTS, PAGE 12

THE BEST BLOOMS FOR AUTUMN

GARDENING, PAGE 17

THE SCILLY SEASON, ALL YEAR ROUND

TRAVEL, PAGE 21



Blackpool, the town that's too old Labour for New Labour

The worker's party has been coming to the worker's playtime capital since 1924. But Blackpool has fallen from conference favour. Is nothing sacred?

It is probably the biggest insult to a British town since the dying King George V offered his view of Bognor Regis to weeping courtiers by his bedside. It is the most spectacular snub to an English conurbation since John Betjeman directed the bombers of the Luftwaffe to try the airspace above Slough. Not since Pompeii disappeared beneath a carpet of molten lava has a famous city been so comprehensively drenched in implicit rebuke. We're still digesting the implications of the news that the Labour Party is deserting Blackpool.

On Monday the party will hold its last annual conference in the Winter Gardens of the Cloth-Shop Riviera. It probably won't be back. In spring this year, the National Executive Committee received presentations from the tourist authorities of Blackpool, Bournemouth and Brighton, discussed their requirements for accommodation, pricing and "facilities" and issued a crushing decision: Bournemouth in 2000, Brighton in 2001, Blackpool thanks but no thanks. The party doesn't actually rule out returning to the Golden Mile once the town has smartened itself up a bit. But they're only being diplomatic. Frankly, Blackpool just doesn't suit any more. It's just so not New Labour.

The worker's party has been coming to the worker's playtime capital since 1927. Their enthusiasm for it outlasted the war years. MPs, trade unionists, delegates and attendant journalists established a rich biennial tradition: meeting at the Winter Gardens, staying at the Imperial, toying with a glass of draught champagne at Yates's Wine Lodge, flooring pints of Boddingtons at Thwaites's, eating seafood at Robert's Oyster Bar on the Promenade,

dancing with their lady wives to Reginald Dixon on the mighty Wurlitzer at the Tower Ballroom, frightening themselves on the vast switchback ride called "The Big One", and watching the massed hordes of the proletariat driving very slowly along the prom and gawping at the Illuminations. Simple pleasures, but honest ones. Blackpool was the natural choice of venue to celebrate the grass-rootsness of the Labour faithful. It briefly turned Labour MPs into pint-of-wallop-and-a-portion-of-chips men - plain dealers and humble democrats discussing unemployment in the Empress pub, rather than smooth-talking Parliamentarians examining the menu in Rules or the Gay Hussar in the effete parlours of London.

Some will miss the old place. "I have many warm memories of Blackpool," says Clare Short. "After a late-night conference, there's nothing to beat the blast of the wind that comes off the front." "Blackpool is the most authentic gathering place for a party of the left anywhere in Europe," says Denis MacShane, Labour MP for Rotherham. "I always stay in small boarding houses and I learn more, in a week of breakfasts, about the heartbeat of the UK than in a month in the Commons." What did he like about it, apart from the conversational insights? "The food is cheaper than in the South, the landladies friendlier, and the presents for your children the most amusing in Europe." But the sea, Denis... "And the

water is far too cold for bathing," concludes MacShane, "so there's no need to risk our polluted seas. I've protested strongly to Tom Sawyer (General Secretary of the Labour Party, who took the final decision) about the switch to the south coast, which frankly is suitable only for Tories, Liberal Democrats and Guardian readers."

In 70 years, of course, the place has changed. Accommodation, for instance. "When I first started coming here," one veteran TUC man told me. "There wasn't an en suite bathroom to be had anywhere

BY JOHN WALSH

but the Imperial. Now it's difficult to find a hotel room in town that doesn't have its own bathroom." He was dead right. As you walk around, you have to get used to the words "All rooms en suite," even though (a) the phrase isn't strictly accurate (it's the washing facilities, not the room, that are en suite) and (b) in some of the less pricey establishments, it'll mean only an "en suite" handbasin. But even this evidence of posh modernity cuts no ice with New Labour's snooty conference organisers.

It can't be a lack of hotels that bothers them. Blackpool is stuffed with hotels. It's said to have more holiday beds than the whole of Portugal. Hotels are everywhere. They seem to have taken over from the normal commercial infrastructure of a sea-

side town. There are hotels instead of shops, hotels instead of private houses, hotels instead of markets, hotels instead of pubs, hotels instead of (or masquerading as) restaurants. You start to suspect that, if you ventured inside the church, you'd find a landlady with a huge bust and an equally formidable attitude problem, standing arms akimbo and asking what time you call this to be coming in for your tea.

As you move into town, or drive along the promenade towards up-market Lytham St Anne's (where you can order real carrot cake in the tea-room, and there's a whole shop devoted to Le Creuset oven-to-tableware), the hotels gradually get scaled down. From the sprawling hall of residence that is the super-modern Stakis Hotel (currently the clued-up delegate's top choice) and the imposing Victorian pile of the Imperial (home of the immortal Number 10 bar, itself the seat of a thousand scenes of late-night intrigue and drink-fuelled prostrations), you move down the architectural-taste scale to the seafront specials, where hotels - the Lyric, the Seaford, the Oakwell - occupying the width of three houses offer views of the revolting Irish Sea through a single windowed frontage. Further along, you drive past the Blackpool Poulton holiday camp, with its ranks of ticky-tacky chalets in pastel pink, pale green and off-biscuit like a Toytown graveyard. Even when a soft Southern girl like myself has made the necessary mental adjustment to the quality of

life in Blackpool hotels, it's still impossible to imagine how any human could want to spend five minutes here. ("Of course it's been recommissioned now, as a boot camp for young offenders," I was told. "And you know what? They didn't have to change a thing to make it penal rather than recreational...")

Further into town, you find smaller hotels, bearing names with no special resonance of comfort or luxury: the Rhoslyn, the Tobermory, the Oakleigh. Through the windows you can see people sitting down for their evening meal at 5.30pm, prior to a night out on the strip, looking for fun. To get to the interior, the secret heart of town, you must walk through the alarming backstreets, mostly avoiding eye contact with demented-looking out-of-towners who stand bewildered on the street corners, as if uncertain whether to cross or stunned by the lovelessness of it all. In Kirby Road, the hotels have shrunk to skinny terraced affairs - Coral Dene, the Dalton, the Tremar - where the lettering is falling off the faded "Licensed" sign, but there are still, mystifyingly, "En suite rooms available". Down the road from the Munch Box café, there's an awning-covered market, where you can buy crotchless knickers, scrunched up inside little transparent plastic eggs, for a quid. There's a tasteful photograph of what they look like, on. The more adventurous can go for an All-Lace Sex Suit (also a quid, making you wonder if it can really be the finest quality lace, from, say, Bruges, or is actually just made of black string).

A whiff of sex hangs gamely over the whole street, pungent as biltong. Impetuous lovers can make use of the Springbok Hotel, one of the few genuine self-declared knocking shops I've seen: it advertises

continued on page 2

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ON SUNDAY

CULTURE

Stephen Bayley –
why I hate Cool Britannia

SUNDAY REVIEW

The men who bought Tina
Brown – the inside story of
the Weinstein brothers

FOCUS

I want my money back –
how Britain discovered
the joys of complaining

REAL LIFE

The yo-yo girls –
never happy with their
shape, they lurch from
Rubenesque to TwiggyPLUS
The Captain rides again

One Nation 6: in Hamburg, the image of Helmut Kohl watches over his car-obsessed compatriots, who pass their electoral verdict on him tomorrow

Brian Harris

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Post letters to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number, fax to 0171 293 2056 or e-mail to letters@independent.co.uk
E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity

Exit Sir Ian

Sir: We should be grateful to Sir Ian McKellen for sparking a debate on the nature of theatre audiences ("Has London theatre reached the stage where it can't find a decent audience?" 24 September). Why are there so many foreign tourists among West End audiences? London is deservedly regarded as the theatre capital of the world, and visitors are keen to be a part of this. Without this income the West End theatre would be the poorer.

However, it is vital that we offer our young people the opportunity to enjoy live theatre. It is unrealistic to expect the average family to pay the average ticket price of over £20. Lottery money might be better spent subsidising theatre tickets for school parties than pouring millions into opera houses for the elite.

My children have been enthralled by productions of Shakespeare, yet we are regarded by their peers as a "weird" family because we take them to the theatre. We need to make the theatre accessible and affordable for families to build up a tradition of indigenous theatre-going.

ELAINE YEO
Enfield, Middlesex

Sir: Why should Sir Ian's departure be regarded as a "loss for the West End", rather than a gain for Leeds? Your newspaper rightly points to the work of pioneering "powerhouse" theatres such as those in Leeds and Nottingham, but how much attention do these theatres get from the national press? You have only to look at the listings pages to see how little. I enjoy going to London to see a play, but I enjoy Nottingham better!

FRANK FERRY
Nottingham

Sir: Perhaps I am taking this all too personally, but I feel a bit miffed at being lumped in as part of Sir Ian McKellen's "London audiences" with non-English speaking tourists who go to the theatre as part of an itinerary of London attractions.

Whilst I would not deny

foreign visitors the right to our great London theatre, the true London theatre aficionados' voice should be heard too. One of the reasons I choose to live in London is the proximity to great theatre, and I go at least once a month. If other actors follow Sir Ian what course will be left for me but a move out to the provinces?

M HILL
London N20

Sir: I am a middle-class, middle-aged, white Irishman who was a visitor to London recently. I queued for over two hours for tickets at the Royal National Theatre. I can assure Sir Ian McKellen that I speak and understand English and that I actually appreciated what I saw on stage. For over 25 years I have enjoyed visiting London and its theatres. Sir Ian is biting the hands that feed him.

PATRICK O'BYRNE
Dublin

Policing the Net

Sir: Police do not seek any new or easy relationship with Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to acquire extra access to material ("Police to intercept e-mails" 21 September). All police approaches to ISPs for access to material are governed by existing law and procedure, and police seek no change to that rigorous regime.

For example, applications to intercept e-mail require a warrant signed by the Home Secretary under the Interception of Communications Act, exactly as with applications to intercept telephone or postal communications. Further, access to data held on computers can only be enforced under a court order signed by a crown court judge under the "special procedures" provisions of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act. Access to other personal data such as records of e-mail transmissions, where available (that is, the times and computer addresses of senders/recipients, but not content) can be applied for by police direct to ISPs, who are permitted to disclose such

information under Section 28 of the 1984 Data Protection Act in certain circumstances. It is for the ISPs to decide whether to release the information.

Neither police nor ISPs are reluctant to publicise the fact that we are discussing how to work together lawfully and effectively. A current series of seminars are intended to help educate both police and ISPs about each others' roles; the police need to understand how the Internet works, and the ISPs need to understand how the law works, what sort of material the police are likely to seek, and the legal procedures involved.

Det Ch Supt K L AKERMAN
Chairman, ACPO Computer
Crime Group
T PEARSON
Research Machines
On behalf of Internet Service
Providers Association
Winchester

Sir: I was astonished that you saw fit to include only a very small article on the crime that is about to be committed against civil liberties in this country. I refer to the police forcing Internet Service Providers to hand over customers' e-mails. This is yet further evidence of the way this country is sleepwalking its way into a state of totalitarian controls.

The police recourse to the 1984 Data Protection Act is irrelevant, as the Internet and the Web had not taken off at that time, and "electronic data" meant something different to what it does now.

TERRY M BOARDMAN
Stourbridge, West Midlands

News viewers

Sir: Your Word on the Street (Media 22 September) couldn't have been more wrong about BBC News 24. More than 2 million homes can receive News 24 and it is being viewed in 44 per cent of those homes; it is also broadcast overnight on BBC1 to an average audience of 120,000. It may come as a shock that a public service broadcaster should have the nerve to invest in future viewer demands, but we are determined that BBC News

will not be left behind in the digital revolution.

BBC News decided in advance of the release of the Clinton tapes how it would cover the event. No one knew for sure what was on them. The fact that the broadcast was happening at all was historic and we took the opening live. But our job was also to make a judgement as to how the tapes would affect the Clinton presidency. Broadcasting all of the tapes was the easy option; it would have meant surrendering our journalism for four hours and leaving the viewers to wade through questions and answers that went nowhere.

TIM ORCHARD
Controller, TV News
Channels, BBC
London W12

NHS ethics

Sir: Dr Janet Menage informs us (Letter 25 September) of the NHS Executive's position that "male circumcision on ... social grounds is not an appropriate NHS service". One could give them some credit for consistency if they also said the same about abortion.

As things stand, NHS bureaucrats see fit to encourage the poisoning and premature expulsion of unborn children, typically in response to social problems, not maternal medical problems, while deploring the removal of a foreskin. Even if one considers the mother alone, to perform an abortion on a healthy woman is open to far greater ethical objections than some would raise against male circumcision. For a doctor to act in breach of medical ethics on the grounds that if he does not, someone else will, the much-invoked spectre of the "backstreet operator" – is a sign of ethical bankruptcy.

BRENDAN GERRARD
Information and Research
Officer
The Society for the Protection
of Unborn Children
London SW1

Sir: John D Dalton (Letter 25 September) invokes the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to argue that "non-therapeutic circumcision on a

normal unconsenting child is unacceptable". What about the UN Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees freedom of religion? Muslims and Jews all over the world are simply following their respective religions.

M RIAZ HASAN
Harrow, Middlesex

Sex god Clinton

Sir: So the Clinton affair rumbles on. My (1953) edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* says: "To appreciate the Homeric Zeus, we must distinguish the lower mythologic aspect of him, in which he appears as an amorous and capricious deity lacking often in dignity and the higher religious aspect in which he is conceived as the all-father."

JOE JACOB
London WC2

Sir: Charles James Fox, suspected of complicity in London riots in the 1780s, considered it an entirely appropriate defence to claim that he was in bed with his mistress at the time. Sexual promiscuity is the norm rather than the exception when we view the lives of eminent politicians in the last 200 years. Is it not time to acknowledge that the appetite for power and the appetite for sex are intimately related.

JOHN FIELD
Aldwick, Northumberland

Sir: Suzanne Moore on Monica Lewinsky states, "She gave him oral sex in return for what?" (Review, 23 September). What can Ms Moore possibly mean?

Echoes of my 1965-born mother. When my brother and his girlfriend came to stay from the States, where to our mother's exact knowledge they had been cohabiting unmarried for some years, I was told in very precise terms that they were to have separate bedrooms (even in my house) because he could not "expect to have his marriage benefits for free".

Is this the same point, or am I missing something.

GRENVILLE SMYTH
London SE15

Sir: Because they didn't bank. Jili Hamilton (Letters 24 September) believes there were no sexual relations. That's rich! Perhaps she can explain why some men pay for the service Ms Lewinsky provided.

DEREK FABIAN
Dumbarton

IN BRIEF

Sir: Now is the time of year when the police could do everyone a favour and have a blitz on people who drive with one or both headlights on full beam, and cyclists with no lights at all, but they probably won't. Would it not be a good exercise to have the occasional "by public request" assault on various forms of anti-social behaviour? We have more laws than any policeman could possibly enforce, and a more democratic way of choosing "actionable offences" would be in everyone's interest.

GRAHAM ROUNCE
London E2

Sir: Yesterday Duncan Hadfield (The Independent Recommends, 25 September) wrote "George Gershwin was born 100 years ago today, in celebration of which Anthony Ingilis conducts the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in a stirring tribute concert." Whereas, actually, George Gershwin was born 100 years ago today, in celebration of which Wayne Marshall conducts Birmingham Contemporary Music Group in a stirring tribute concert at Symphony Hall, Birmingham.

STEPHEN NEWBOULD
Birmingham Contemporary
Music Group

Sir: There is nothing new in the suggestion that the UK, like the US, should have regional time ("Archer wants time zone for Cella", 24 September). Liverpool set its clocks 12 minutes behind Greenwich until 1847, when councillors resolved to adopt GMT. But in other respects they were ahead of London – for by 1854 a public electric (1) clock had been installed in Castle Street.

FRITZ SPIEGEL
LiverpoolBlackpool: too
old Labour for
New Labour

Continued from page 1

"One-Nighters Only" and "Just for Adults – Couples Only" above an ideogram of a chap and girl running along holding hands. The flat fee (for – what – an hour's stay?) is £10. And sex is by no means the only thing on offer. The hotel boasts an "All-nite license", in the middle of which, they suggest, you may like to break off and "Try our famous 3am curry". No wonder taxis in Blackpool all carry a special notice along the lines of: "SOILING this vehicle through FOOD,

DRINK OR SICKNESS. A £20 CLEANING FEE will be PAYABLE to the DRIVER." Blackpool may have appealed to generations of Labourites as the road of excess which, according to William Blake, leads to the Palace of Wisdom. Some speak wistfully of the good old days when things were more spectacularly awful. "I remember a place called the Park House Hotel," one MP told me, "which was legendary, really quite fantastically awful. I never stayed there myself but friends would tell me how, to get to their rooms, they had to climb over drunken members of staff who had simply collapsed in the corridor when they couldn't find the way to their rooms". Now, locals complain about the place with a low-level whine of dismay. "I took a chap from Bosnia round the South Pier area not long ago," said a lady at the station. "I'd met him when I was out in former Yugoslavia visiting my sister in the Red Cross. And really, as we walked about the

town, it was so grotty I felt like apologising. I mean... to a guy who lives in a war zone..." "It's because nobody's spent any money on the place in years," said her friend, who lives in the Fleetwood end of the town. "All the available cash has gone on shoring up the sea defences".

Locals must feel aggrieved at the treatment they've been given by travel writers over the years. The American best-seller Bill Bryson came a-visiting in 1994 and wrote his findings in *Notes from a Small Island*. Though he'd lived in north Yorkshire for 17 years, he wasn't keen on Blackpool. He congratulated it on its £250-million-a-year tourist industry, which was, he remarked, "no small achievement when you consider the fact that Blackpool is ugly, dirty and a long way from anywhere, that its sea is an open toilet, and its attractions nearly all cheap, provincial and dire". He was disappointed by the illuminations – several miles of small, brightly-lit faces and car-

toon figures hung on lamp-posts, some sponsored by McDonalds, some featuring faces from *Coronation Street*, some apparently taken from cereal packets – which he called "tacky and inadequate on rather a grand scale, like Blackpool itself". In 1995, Charles Jennings, a sneery Londoner who went to the same Oxford college as Tony Blair, poured scorn on the place in his book *Up North*: its size, its smell ("Blackpool is the first place I've been to where the whole town has halitosis") and its habit of bragging that every novelty bar and fish 'n' chip shop, every nondescript hotel and leisureplex is "world famous". He also noted the presence of two Gypsy Petulengros, both allegedly the original and authentic soothsayer, operating at different ends of town. Now, Mr Jennings would probably not be surprised to learn, there are five of them.

As you traverse the Golden Mile, taking in the howling penny arcades, the undifferentiated sweets 'n' gifts emporia, the vast

indie inanity of the three great piers, the clanking, redundant trams, it's hard to feel that this proliferating neon junkyard will ever again be a fashionable venue for anyone except European documentary-makers truffling for grot. Blackpool's heyday was the second half of the 19th century, when they built the three piers and the Tower, when the sea was less toxically polluted and the beach became the playground of Lancashire's new industrialised labour force. Today, when seven days here amid the pong of candy floss, vinegar and cheap sex will cost you the same as a sunny week in the Greek islands, the city hoteliers and fun impresarios have to supplement the falling-off of business where and how they can: the DSS pay for unemployed and homeless people to be put up in guest houses; the local free-sheet, *Blackpool Visitor*, has a one-page guide "For the Less-Able Guest". It has become a short-stay destination, a Friday-to-Monday £50 burst of folly

by people with a severely foreshortened idea of a good time.

With diligent hunting you can find some worthwhile bits of Blackpool – there's a handsome and friendly pub called the Washington in Topping Street, September's Brasserie on Queen's Square has a menu full of marinated trout and bison casserole at which even Derek Draper couldn't turn up his nose, and the Grand National on the South Pier Pleasure Beach is undoubtedly the most terrifying train ride in the history of the universe. But the town's status as the vacation paradise of the working man seems more and more irrelevant to the pretensions of New Labour. Like the sea that crouches and creeps a mile from the promenade and never seems to get any nearer, the Labour Party will keep a close eye on Blackpool for its symbolic identity as the proletarian heartland – but without wanting to roll into its clanging streets and urinous, chip-festooned doorways, ever again.

09/10/2015

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We're still too class-conscious for a classless society

IT SHOULD come as no surprise that more than half the population think of themselves as working class. People's image of their place in society changes only very slowly, and, when Margaret Thatcher began her programme of aggressive promotion of middle-class values in 1979, the split was roughly two-thirds working and one-third middle. There is, of course, more than meets the eye to yesterday's finding by ICM that 55 per cent of Britons describe themselves as working class and 41 per cent as middle class. These kinds of numbers can only be produced by a variety of what Americans call "push-polling", forcing respondents to choose one label or other: it has long been the case that, when asked more open-ended questions, a large minority would prefer not to assign themselves to any class at all.

But even those who do not see themselves as members of a particular grouping would recognise that social class still matters. Britain at the end of this century is nothing like as class-ridden as it was at the beginning, but it is still excessively class-conscious.

In a sense, this is a good thing. At least we have none of the hypocrisy of the United States, a nation built on the myth of social mobility – a promise which is, for most Americans, as illusory as that of the lottery. There is much truth in the old cartoon: Person A: "I'm reading a book about how the American class system operates." Person B: "I didn't know there was a class system in America." Person A: "That's how it operates."

No one has any doubt about how the British system operates: private education and inheritance are the system's two transmission mechanisms, the unspoken closed shops of various of the highest-paid occupations its defences. But the system has always been fluid enough to avoid the build-up of real class hostility, and the finer gradations of class distinction in Britain are breaking down.

Perhaps the most disappointing of ICM's findings is that only 1 per cent of people think of themselves as upper class. This is the group whose foibles and eccentricities provide most entertainment for the rest of us, and their shortage forces mass-market newspapers to fall back on reporting the antics of low-rent celebs.

It is interesting that, when Gallup first introduced opinion polling into this country just before the Second World War, questions about class invited people to allocate themselves to a multi-layered hierarchy, including the "aristocracy", a middle class divided into upper, middle and lower and an intermediate category called "upper working class".

Those kinds of caste differences have been abolished by changes, and a greater rate of turnover, in the labour market and by the great post-war backlash against snobbery. The most significant victim of this backlash has been the upper middle class, with its great "public" schools and extreme RP accent. Even in the BBC, once its liberal annex, the full RP accent has become unacceptable – although only for men: Anna Ford and Sue MacGregor are still allowed to talk posh.

The upper middle class may still have most of the money, but its members do not command the deference they once did. In this respect, British society does increasingly resemble that of the US, with the vast majority of the population effectively middle class, with

partitioned minorities at the top and bottom. The state of British politics, always class-based, is a telling indicator of this. The word "class" occurred only three times in Labour's manifesto last year (except as in "sizes"). The first time was in Tony Blair's introduction, in which he dismissed "middle class versus working class" as one of the "bitter political struggles" that "we aim to put behind us". The other two were in relation to preventing the growth of an "underclass" in Britain, "a permanent have-not class, unemployed and disaffected from society".

And that is probably how most people see class in this country today: a large majority of haves, with minorities of have-nots and have-lots on either side. Mr Blair's attention to the causes of social exclusion is admirable, but it might be balanced by a little more attention to the breaking down of the real, but increasingly obscured, class barriers at the top end of the scale.

We are still some way in this country from judging people not by their name, school, accent or colour but by the content of their character. That would be a modern definition of class.



Don't deride a grand coalition in Germany

AND THE winner is... well, everyone. Against every early indication, tomorrow's German election has turned into a cliffhanger. Conceivably, Helmut Kohl could complete an extraordinary political comeback and win a fifth consecutive mandate for the centre-right. Marginally more probable, according to the opinion polls, is a Red-Green coalition led by Gerhard Schröder. Germany's somewhat unconvincing version of Tony Blair. But the most probable outcome, and the one expected by most Germans themselves, is the "elephants' marriage", of Christian Democrats and Social Democrats ruling jointly in a grand coalition, with the chancellor provided by whichever of Germany's two dominant parties emerges with the most seats. The only losers would be the small parties and the fringes – Free Democrats, Greens, the far right and the former Communists in East Germany – incapable of mounting any serious opposition in the Bundestag to the CDU-SPD juggernaut.

At which point, in Britain, some will say: "I told you so". Once again, proportional representation will stand accused of failing to deliver the strong one-party government needed, as the cliché has it, to "take the tough decisions". They will warn of paralysis, and of the danger of encouraging the political extremes, by making the small parties feel left out in the cold. In fact, however, a grand coalition may be precisely what Germany now needs to take some exceptionally tough decisions. Whoever becomes chancellor must embark on a massive updating of the long-admired but increasingly ossified German model. Reforms to improve tax incentives and labour-market flexibility, and to scale back hugely expensive pensions and welfare benefits, can be put off no longer.

Never forget, however, that Germany – for reasons we all know – likes its politics steady and predictable, where change is gradual and consensus is everything. That is why no postwar chancellor has ever been directly voted out of office at an election; and why, to the abhorrence of first-past-the-posters, the balance of power has mostly been held by the Free Democrats, shifting their allegiance between the CDU and the SPD. Yet the changes required now will perform cause pain and division. Much better that the reforms come with the backing of both left and right.

Moreover, neither side deserves to win outright. The old warhorse, Helmut Kohl, may have been lately galvanised by the scent of a last, improbable victory. But 16 years in power is already too long – and Dr Kohl insists he will not head a grand coalition, even if his CDU win the most seats. That task would fall to his designated heir, Wolfgang Schäuble, Germany's most popular politician. But beyond the slick Blairite trappings of their campaign, the Social Democrats, too, have hardly shone as they lurch between Old Labour and New Labour.

Unlike Mr Blair, Mr Schröder has failed to truly modernise his party. He is still regarded as something of a frontman for Oskar Lafontaine, the hard man of the old Social Democrats. Like Labour in 1987 and 1992, the SPD is not ready for power alone. Germany has already experienced one grand coalition, between 1966 and 1969, which formed a bridge between 17 years of Christian Democrat rule and the 13 years of SPD-led Government which followed. A grand coalition of 1998 could perform a similar role now.

Republican wrongs don't make Bill Clinton right

I MAY have given the impression last week that I regarded Bill Clinton as the most reprehensible public figure in America. Wrong. In fact, these days, he's standing on a pretty crowded shelf. Right there next to him are Kenneth Starr and Newt Gingrich and the other centurions of the American right.

After watching the wretched video interrogation of Clinton, I was almost tempted to set my scorn for the embattled President to one side. Starr's interrogators came across as the most odious kind of salacious inquisitors. That they managed to arouse so much public hostility in spite of a dreadful performance from Clinton – hair-splitting and evasive – says something for their collective reptilian character.

As for the Special Prosecutor, he has simply confirmed what most people always suspected: he is driven by deep animus for Clinton. His hatred of the President far outweighs any commitment he feels to the higher obligations of justice and truth. Thus his presentation of the evidence in the Lewinsky case has been riddled with bias from the very earliest stages.

I have no evidence to support this, but I suspect Starr was a nasty piece of work at school. You can imagine the type. The creepy prefect who confiscates your *Playboy* and then runs off to the toilets for a spot of drooling and self-abuse. The kind of fellow who would take a twitching pleasure from administering beatings.

As for Gingrich, the bouncing bully of American politics has been trying to make Clinton's life as difficult as possible, struggling to conceal his glee when he addresses the cameras.

That is what his constituency expects and what his own pygmy's vision of politics demands.

Gingrich will never be President and he knows it. He is frustrated and bitter and he sees in Clinton the clever and charismatic man he cannot ever be. So don't misunderstand me. Clinton of Clinton does not imply any approval of Starr and his political Godfather. They come from a political tradition that celebrates greed and regards the notion of "society" as laughably naive. They are not my tribe and they are the last thing America needs.

None of this, however, mitigates what remains for me the principal charge against Clinton: that he has grievously abused his power. Again, let me make clear what I am objecting to here. What Clinton does with consenting adults is entirely his and their own business. I don't believe that politicians or public figures deserve to be hounded because of their sex lives.

By writing critically about Clinton and sex, one runs the risk of sounding like a sanctimonious prat. So understand, please, that I too regard the relentless pursuit of politicians and celebrities because of their sex lives as loathsome. I don't care if Clinton is sexually driven. I couldn't care less if he had an orgy with 20 Lewinskys. That should be a matter for himself and those immediately affected, like his family. The key word here is "consent".

And that is why I come back again this week to the cases of Paula Jones and Kathleen Willey. The former says that Clinton exposed himself to her in a hotel bedroom at a time when she was just a lowly state employee.



FERGAL KEANE
My pity is mitigated by the knowledge that we are dealing with a supremely ruthless politician

Willey alleges that Clinton tried to force himself on her in that famous corridor next to the Oval Office.

You may not like these women, you may believe that they have become tools of the far right. But given Clinton's status as a proven liar – a liar who lies under oath – do you refuse to believe that they are telling the truth when they claim to have been harassed and assaulted by him? If you don't believe them, there is no problem. You don't need to get that upset about his antics with Monica Lewinsky. They were, as I've said, two adults doing what a great many adults do and lie about.

The difficulty comes if you do believe Jones and Willey. Then you really do have a problem. Then you must ask yourself whether you can lend moral support to a man who has physically abused at least two women. And however much he tries to portray himself as an ordinary Joe, the President is not just any man. He is

the upholder of a constitution which promises to protect all of its citizens from any arbitrary abuses of power. That is the heart of this matter.

And lest anybody feel too worn down with pity for Clinton, I would ask you to remember his own record of compassion when it came to the issue of executions in his home state of Arkansas. Here was the man who proudly boasted that he always liked to be home for an execution in Arkansas, a man who played the law-and-order card as hard as any right-wing Republican.

Do I feel sorry for him? Yes, of course there is a natural element of human pity for somebody who is so relentlessly humiliated, somebody whose private life is clearly an unfulfilled torment. But my pity is mitigated by the knowledge that we are dealing with a supremely ruthless politician. I have far more pity for the Sudanese families who suffered when Mr Clinton dispatched his cruise missiles on their mission of distraction on the day that Monica Lewinsky was recalled to the grand jury.

The vast majority of ordinary Americans appear to support him. After all the dire predictions about the video, it is Messrs Starr and Gingrich who have suffered most. Clinton's popularity just rises and rises. I was queuing to purchase a copy of the Starr Report in a New York bookstore last week and I asked the cashier, a young black woman, what she thought about the scandal.

"He's a man, honey," she replied. Was she bothered that he had lied to the American people, I wondered. "Like I said, he's a man." Indeed, the cashier was far more

upset with Mr Starr for wasting taxpayers' money on his investigation.

It has been a good week for the "Comeback Kid", a bad one for his critics. It has been the week in which the liberal press (the most self-regarding of all American institutions) in Washington and New York has seemed well out of touch with the feelings of the people. In short, it has been a bad week for Mr Clinton's enemies.

I have had liberal friends say to me during the week that I was wrong to criticise Clinton in such vehement terms last week. They have pointed out, quite correctly, that his role in the Irish peace process was crucial; he was, I have been told, a man who allowed minorities to feel truly American for the first time in a generation. Some went so far as to suggest that, as a liberal, I had no business attacking him.

Indeed, I share David Aaronovitch's horror (expressed on this page earlier this week) at the thought of the ultra-right climbing to power amid the ruins of the Clinton presidency. But where I differ with my liberal friends is in accepting the notion that because he is "our lying bastard" we should protect him. That suggests to me a political tribalism which represents as much a threat to democracy as Newt Gingrich and his right-wing chums. It is precisely because he is "our lying bastard" that we need to give him a hard time.

It is worth recalling a speech given in 1995 by an American politician to a group of students. "The road to tyranny," he said, "begins with the destruction of truth." That politician's name was William Jefferson Clinton.

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MONITOR

ALL THE NEWS OF THE WORLD

Bill Clinton video • The Third Way • The arrest of Anwar Ibrahim • Lesotho riots • Euro-notes • Florence Griffith-Joyner

THE THIRD WAY

Views on the meaning of the Third Way, the political philosophy outlined by Tony Blair in a Fabian pamphlet

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

THE THIRD Way was explained in a Sunday newspaper by the Prime Minister's good friend, the author Robert Harris. He described it as "a whole new kind of politics... potentially even revolutionary". Mr Blair's grand purpose, Mr Harris revealed, was to reconcile all familiar political beliefs, objectives and emotions, however conflicting they might appear, under a system known as "permanent revisionism". This sounds like a pretty terrifying roller-coaster, and already the Prime Minister has started to turn our world upside down. When he has had his way with the constitution, we will not understand the nature of the United Kingdom any more.

We will find that the English "Mildred" is no longer someone to be respected for his quarterings or his acreage, but some unselected government placeman. And "low-ranking police officers" will be in line for knighthoods. Instead of "Good morning, officer", we will have to say "Good morning, Sir Kevin. And how is her ladyship today?"

THE ECONOMIST

MIGHT THE Third Way foreshadow an eventual move to create a new centre-left grouping in British politics, combining the mainstreams of the Labour Party and the Lib Dems? Such a thought would infuriate the left of the Labour Party - "Old Labour" in Blairpeak.

But Mr Blair might be quite glad to be shot of them. He may feel that he has more in common with the Lib Dems than the wilder fringes of his own party. But just as the prospect of a long-term relationship with Labour is beckoning, some Lib Dems are hesitating at the altar. They worry that their party is not being true to itself.

FINANCIAL TIMES

TODAY'S POLITICAL leaders are drawn from the managerial classes. They cannot change the world, they shrug. And yet... they know that without ideas and inspiration, poli-

tics cannot conceal its hollowiness. Pragmatism must make some connection with principle.

Here we find the explanation for the efforts of Bill Clinton, Tony Blair, Romano Prodi and others to add intellectual nourishment to the politics of the centre left.

With cruel irony, the gospel of slim hut effective government is being preached at just the moment when we see politics and politicians at their most ineffectual.

The present gale blowing through the global financial system has shown them powerless. Markets, we are learning, are ruthless toward the pretensions of our politicians. Where, I wonder, is the Third Way which leads us out of world recession? (Philip Stephens)

DAILY MAIL

WHILE AMERICANS are glued to the marathon video of their President telling that grand jury under oath about his relationship with Miss Lewinsky, our own Prime Minister will today be closeted with him and other international dignitaries for a seminar on The Third Way. For Tony Blair, this concept is about following some misty path between capitalism and socialism. The mind boggles at what precisely the Third Way might mean to Bill Clinton.

NEW STATESMAN

THE THIRD Way lacks a political economy. Mr Blair and his fellow Third Way thinkers talk often of duties and responsibilities. But the only duty required of a public limited company, quoted on the Stock Exchange, is to maximise dividends for its shareholders. How does Mr Blair propose to impose wider duties - to say, social cohesion or the health of its workers and customers or to its local environment? How does he intend to control the unaccountable power of the supermarkets, the pension funds and the multimedia giants. Old social democracy relied on powerful trade unions and the threat of actuality of nationalisation. Until now social democracy offers some new answers, it deserves a sceptical reception.

FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE
Germany

DOES PRESIDENT Clinton deserve this public humiliation? Does his statement satisfy the desires of the grand jury about his relationship with his former aide? Or does it fulfill a higher purpose? In fact, the publishing of the video interview and a thick volume of back-up evidence is a disaster, an embarrassment never to be outdone in the history of the presidency.

What happened on Monday was an example of personal degradation. But the true instigator of these degrading antics was none other than the person in the middle, Mr Clinton himself.

His actions in his office were undignified and just as the president cannot prevent himself from further degradation, his personal authority and credibility will never come back.

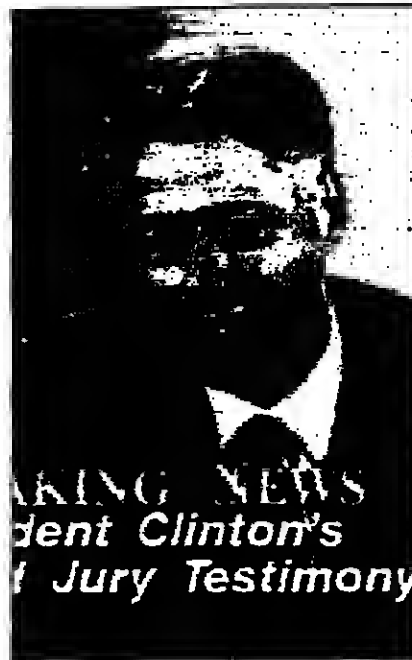
SYDNEY MORNING HERALD
Australia

IT IS AS if the whole country has become immersed in a pornographic novel with the sleazy characters and steamy plot set in the White House. It is impossible to simply close the book. The material seeps in everywhere. Primary schoolchildren now make jokes about cigars.

High school teachers are conducting a radically new version of civics lessons with students who no longer think school is boring. And every person over the age of 10 - and many a lot younger - knows that oral sex is not just talk.

This is the White House meets national peep show. It makes Oprah Winfrey-style revelations look old-fashioned. Most Americans are already embarrassed for their country. They like to be proud of their President, confident in America's power and prestige. Now they sense that the President - and the US - are becoming an international joke rather than a serious force. They realise that the US is showing the way to the 21st century in a very different way than Mr Clinton ever envisaged when he announced his second term would be the bridge to the millennium.

But still no one can tear themselves away from the story.



BILL CLINTON'S GRAND JURY VIDEO

Opinion following the worldwide broadcast of President Bill Clinton's televised testimony to a grand jury investigating whether he had committed perjury in a previous proceeding

THE CEDAR RAPIDS GAZETTE
United States

ONE OF the most disturbing aspects of the controversy swirling around President Bill Clinton is what appears to be a widespread misunderstanding among Americans of why lying under oath is a serious crime. If parties to a legal action cannot be forced to tell the truth, the entire justice system collapses.

This compelling need of the government to get the truth has the potential to conflict with an individual citizen's right to protect himself. The Founders recognised this, and provided for it in the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution. A citizen cannot lie under oath with impunity, but he can refuse to answer questions, and his refusal cannot be considered as evidence of guilt.

Although some of his supporters may not know this, Bill Clinton certainly does.

As chief executive, he is the chief law enforcement officer of the nation. He is a lawyer. He taught in law school. If, as now appears likely, he swore to tell the truth and then violated that oath, not once but numerous times in at least two venues, he committed a serious crime that the nation can ignore only at its peril.

CORRIERE DELLA SERA
Italy

THE WHOLE world cannot be sent haywire by the President's behaviour in private, even if it is clumsy, even if it is "inappropriate" as the defendant - obviously suffering from some form of priapism which, they tell me, is a very unpleasant affliction which cannot be relieved either appropriately or inappropriately - has himself admitted. It is quite inadmissible that while the President is addressing the UN, the man on the street is following his com-

otions, his inarticulacy, and his anatomical hair-splitting worthy only of a green seminarist hauled before the Inquisition. Now Mr Clinton is coming to Italy, the only country which, instead of castigating weaknesses, encourages them. As is shown by the case of the old senator who kept his seat for years thanks to the popularity gained for his reputation as a "groper".

THE JORDAN TIMES

WHAT PRICE will President Clinton pay? Impeachment seems rather harsh, and a censure by Congress pretty meaningless. We suggest something in between: if the US Congress, representing the American people, finds Bill Clinton's behaviour to be unacceptable, it should ask him to take a voluntary leave of absence for two months, giving him time and reason for atonement, redemption and all the other good things that he says he is now deeply engaged in.

THE ARREST OF ANWAR IBRAHIM

Comments on the arrest of the Malaysian deputy prime minister during the Queen's visit to the Commonwealth Games

HONG KONG STANDARD
China

THE ARREST of sacked Malaysian deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim, was expected. The wonder is Mahathir allowed matters to get so far. In the end, it needed hundreds of armed policemen to carry out the arrest. That such a show of force was necessary shows how much the Premier has to fear from Mr Anwar's campaign to bring him down. Whether Mahathir himself can stay on as Premier is another question altogether. It depends on whether there is anyone to carry the Anwar torch. Whatever, we must pray that events play out peacefully.

SYDNEY MORNING HERALD
Australia

THE SUMMARY arrest of Anwar Ibrahim is a sign of des-

peration on the part of the Malaysian Prime Minister. Dr Mahathir has been securing his position, this clumsy act of raw power under the Internal Security Act has increased the likelihood of his own downfall, sooner rather than later. When the time comes for supposedly serious charges to be laid against someone in Anwar's position, the first reaction is to disbelieve them, and suspect a politically motivated smear campaign, though enforced by outdated security laws. Dr Mahathir might have the upper hand for the moment. But this is a power struggle with a long way to run yet. The forces for change might not be wholly with Anwar. But they are definitely against Dr Mahathir.

THE ECONOMIST

IF DR Mahathir wants to avoid the fate of his Indonesian counterpart, he should turn his back on his current course of ever-greater autocracy and

turn instead to sharing power and preparing the succession. He was once a hero of globalisation. He delivered fantastic economic growth by welcoming foreign investment. Now he wants to seal Malaysia off, insulating the economy through capital controls, blocking foreign TV pictures of unrest, and detaining his fiercest critics. Isolation did not work for Subarto. It will not work for Mahathir.

WASHINGTON POST
United States

ANWAR WAS told that if he resigned without a fuss he would be safe from prosecution. Mahathir may care little for world opinion. But his latest show of contempt for the rule of law may hurt Malaysia not only in the eyes of foreign investors but also among Malaysians who until now respected their premier as a builder of their modern nation.

LESOTHO RIOTS

South African views about their government's intervention to quell rebellion in Lesotho

CAPE ARGUS

IT SURELY required no great feat of military judgment to have realised at the outset that, although the core of the problem might have been a group of madmen rebelling in the Lesotho Defence Force, the situation had become infused by civilian disorder. It is easy to be wise after the event, but all things point to the need for a comprehensive and public inquiry into the planning and execution of this military exercise.

DAILY DISPATCH

WE SURELY have no right to cross the border of a country to restore law and order on behalf of a government whose legitimacy is unclear. We messed it up from the beginning. Instead of assisting democracy, we have hampered it. We have created a serious situation, and the problem we face now will be how to extricate ourselves without doing more harm. One

thing is for sure: we will do so without honour. Let it end sooner rather than later.

THE CAPE TIMES

THE SOUTH African Government has miscalculated badly. Not since this country invaded Angola have South African soldiers been required to sacrifice their lives on foreign soil.

THE MAIL & GUARDIAN

THIS INTERVENTION is likely to swing popular opinion against South Africa. Until now, the Basotho have accepted South Africa's influence and economic support, but have been determined to remain independent so as to keep their monarchy. With fighting still raging around Maseru, looting, progressing, and Maseru in flames, Buthe's recent promise of talks would seem optimistic.

THE QUEEN'S HEAD AND THE EURO

Editorial reactions to the news that the European Central Bank has decided not to permit national symbols on the euro currency

THE SUN

THE FACELESS, unselected bankers have goose-stepped over the people of Europe. No monarchs or national symbols will appear on euro notes. There will be no discussion. No argument. No vote. Just get on with it. The European Central Bank has spoken.

It proves beyond dispute what The Sun has warned for years. The single currency is a giant sledgehammer which will crush national sovereignty and independence to dust. The political fanatics want us all to be the same. One currency. One flag. One state.

DAILY MAIL

SHOULD WE surrender sterling for the euro, the image of Britain's monarch will be forever banished from our banknotes. Who says so? No elected body. No, nor any European council of ministers in which our Government participates.



With all the nonchalant hauteur of the Red Queen in Alice in Wonderland declaring "off with her head", Wim Duisenberg, president of the European Central Bank, has ruled that no emblems of statehood must be allowed to appear on its euro notes.

All key decisions about the notes have become the sovereign responsibility of this bunch of democratically unelected bankers. They will not countenance another sovereign's head on their banknotes. In New Europe they are set to become the masters now.

THE EXPRESS

THE POUND sterling, like the Queen and the Union Flag and the House of Lords, is not just a symbol. It has a solid practical intent. It declares that, wherever the pound is legal tender, the economic interests of Britain will be followed. If those notes are replaced by euros, with or without the Queen's face, then these levers will have passed into the hands of people we have not chosen and cannot control. (Peter Hitchens)

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

THIS REPRESENTS a further, graphic step towards the destruction of our national identity. Tony Blair must be particularly annoyed. Before the election, he wrote lyrically about the importance of keeping the Queen's head on £10 notes - even though he now wants to abolish them when the time is right.

MISCELLANEOUS

Stories from around the world

THE TENERIFE TIMES

IN THE wake of growing public concern over the antics of jet-ski joyriders in various Tenerife resorts, police finally decided to take a strong line when they seized eight machines in Las Teresitas beach, Santa Cruz, after numerous complaints from angry bathers.

But it wasn't a case of megaphones calling "numbers 1 to 8 to come in, please, your time is up". The riders paid as much attention to the representatives of the forces of law and order as they did to the people whose safety they were endangering.

A Sea Rescue spokesman said that jet-skis are theoretically obliged to stay beyond an invisible boundary, approximately 50 metres from bathing areas, and 200 metres from the actual coast. "But the

trouble is," he said, "there are no marine police to enforce that regulation, and the jet-skiers know it, and take advantage of it."

THE BALTIMORE SUN
United States

CATS ARE disappearing from Patterson Park neighbourhood at an alarming rate, and their owners are blaming pit bull breeders. Residents accuse the breeders of stealing the pets, and using them as live bait to train the dogs as prize fighters.

Two reports of dead cats found in the Southeast Baltimore Park since Thursday have been confirmed. One was reportedly tied to a children's swing, and allowed to be mauled and mutilated by a pit bull to give the dog "a taste of

blood," a fier warning about the abductions says. Robert Anderson, the director of Baltimore's Animal Shelter, confirmed finding the dead cats in the park. "If you have a cat, do not let it out of the house," he said. "It's healthiest for the cat."

THE SWAZI OBSERVER
Swaziland

DOCTORS REMAINED puzzled about an epileptic fit patient who was miraculously "healed" after he was prayed for during a revival session of the Back To God Crusade, in Lozitha. Previous diagnosis of the 19-year-old Bongani Dlamini showed that the boy had a brain tumour, which was identified by the use of a MRI X-ray.

IN MEMORIAM

Comment about the life of Florence Griffith-Joyner

TAMPA TRIBUNE
United States

FLO-JO IS done running, but minds race. That's how it goes in these fast times. A star so bright disappears so young. We wince. We cringe. They say it was her heart, but we know it had to be something worse. It had to be. Right? We wait on autopsy results. Until Monday, it seemed as though that would be her legacy: vibrant, young, winning. Now we wait to see if she paid the ultimate price for her success.

HONG KONG STANDARD
China

GRIFFITH-JOYNER was tainted with accusations that her performances in Seoul were only achieved on the back of



steroid abuse, and she was surrounded by rumours that her striking new muscle definition was chemically induced. Florence Griffith-Joyner did not go gentle into the night.

LE MONDE
France

TO DIE a few weeks before her

39th birthday, when she was, and had been for 10 years, the fastest sprinter of all time was the paradoxical destiny of Florence Griffith-Joyner. Everything went too fast in the life of the woman Americans called "Flo-Jo". So fast that, at that moment when it stopped, one asks oneself if she hadn't risked her life in beginning a lethal chain reaction.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK

"Lord make my words sweet and reasonable. For some day I may have to eat them."

Paddy Ashdown, Leader of the Liberal Democrats

"Close up, my face is starting to resemble an Ordnance Survey map."

George Michael, pop singer

"If I said I was a Blairite no one would believe it, as I have a reputation for not being a Blairite, whatever a Blairite is."

Michael Meacher, Environment Minister

"The euro has all the design faults of the Titanic."

Michael Ancram, Conservative Party Deputy Chairman

"It's frustrating that we can get lots of sponsorship for others and red squirrels but none for the narrow-headed ant."

Dr Simon Lyster, Director General of the Wildlife Trusts

THE WEEKEND REVIEW

The hippy who made me swing for his supper

I WAS a free man in Paris, unfettered and alive after university and before the first real job, sitting around in Left Bank bars, reading Frederick Exley, discovering sex, going to Léo Ferré concerts, running away from my Englishness. It was the early Seventies.

For any young foreigner with literary leanings, the place to hang out was Shakespeare and Company, a rickety second-hand bookshop run by George Whitman, a small, unkempt American with a straggly goatee beard and few teeth. It was how Paris should be, we thought. Upstairs, making tea on a grime-encrusted gas-ring, would be George's house-mother of the moment, usually a plain, sweet American with a slightly tragic past. There were beds in the two book-lined rooms where "young

writers" could, in return for work, stay the night and be eaten by the most vicious bedbugs in the city. Photographs of Ginsberg and Ferlinghetti and Corso hung on the walls, and, occasionally, earnest poetry readings would be held. It was all pretty fake; the young writers were as near to being Henry Miller or William Burroughs as George's shop was to Sylvia Beach's original Shakespeare and Company of the Twenties.

One would-be Ernest Hemingway I remember with particular pain. Slightly older and more travelled than we were, he was said to be working on a novel, was widely perceived to be a real writer and was invariably to be found in the company of several admirers. One night, this man - almost certain to have been called Tex - delighted

me by asking me to join his group for dinner at a local restaurant. I was less flattered when, having

wolfed down their food, my fellow diners did a runner, leaving me with a large bill to pay.

I returned to the bookshop. Tex was nowhere to be found, but his typewriter was there. I considered leaving it into the Seine but, in the end, hid it on top of a cupboard. Then, unwisely, I sat down to wait for him. When he returned, my suggestion that, if he wanted his typewriter back, he should repay me was not well received. He leapt across the room, grabbed me by my hair and whirled me round the room for about five minutes. This tactic, which is a lot less girly and more effective than is generally believed, convinced me quite soon that I cared less for my 100 francs than I had previously thought. Tex got his typewriter back. We haven't stayed in touch.

I find myself thinking of Tex quite often these days. A hippy control freak and counterculture bully who used the spirit of the age for his own ends, he's there when Ken Kesey puts on a nostalgia show at the Barbican, when Hunter S Thompson humiliates some huckster journalist or when Dennis Hopper appears on the cinema screen. His wife hung over this week's oddest TV documentary, in which Iain Sinclair and Chris Petit explored, in a weird, dislocated fashion, the life and high times of a sinister Sixties figure, Peter Whitehead.

It was all there: the crazy theories, the whiff of paedophilia and misogyny, the cruelty and the exploitation of others. From what one could gather from the doped-up narrative, Whitehead ended up stealing falcon eggs to sell to Arabs

and weaving a seedy, self-important story about incest and spying.

For every self-mythologising prat who actually achieved something (a novel, a film, a poem, but rarely much more), there were hundreds of frauds like Tex. Their brains pickled in narcotics, they had a sort of fake articulacy which allowed them to float through life on a sea of pretentiousness and paranoia, spouting crazed theories which they plucked, without any intellectual coherence, from Reich, Krishnamurti, Chomsky, Crowley or the I Ching. Because they seemed to represent freedom from the suburban values which we held in such contempt, the idiocies they spouted were rarely challenged. Utterly self-serving, they used the hippy ethic to scrounge off others and bully girls into bed with

them as the brief, early innocence of the mid-Sixties gave way to a creepy, voyeuristic sadism that made victims of the young and gullible.

At the time, I envied them their freedom, the way they let the good times roll whatever the price. Now it's clear that they were smug, beaming would-be fascists whose political commitment was incomparably less interesting or genuine than that of modern protesters, including even the benighted idiots who release mink into the wild in the name of animal rights.

A couple of years ago I visited George Whitman, still holding court and drinking disgusting tea at Shakespeare and Company. Tex, he told me, was caught drug-smuggling and is in a Thai prison. I wonder if he ever wrote that novel.



TERENCE BLACKER

Utterly self-serving, the hippies used their ethic to scrounge off others and bully girls into bed

THE SATURDAY PROFILE ROBIN COOK, FOREIGN SECRETARY

Labour's falling star

I was, perhaps predictably, Margaret Cook who provided the best analysis of the cause of the problems that have beset the career of her former husband. In the immediate aftermath of the collapse of her marriage last summer she identified the extent to which ambition and single-mindedness among politicians distort their view of reality. It had a domestic implication but it also applied to the political life of the man who had only recently become Foreign Secretary.

The really extraordinary thing is that it is only since Robin Cook achieved so much of his lifetime's ambition, only since he reached a position of real political power, only after his appointment to one of the great offices of state that so much seems to have gone so wrong for him. All that ambition and single-mindedness brought him to the Cabinet table and yet, so far, it seems only to have brought public humiliation and political ignominy. It is one of the great surprises of the Blair administration.

There was good news this week at last. The announcement from the Iranian Government that it was prepared officially to disavow the fatwa on Salman Rushdie was obviously a diplomatic coup, for which Cook deserves personal credit. He must hope that it might mark a change in his personal fortune and other changes on the international scene may help his standing as a statesman on the world stage: a new Social Democratic Chancellor in Germany, for example, may well provide a new Anglo-German political axis that could assist the position of the British Foreign Secretary as a player. The time for his political recovery is certainly due.

It all started so well. Only just over a year ago he was being feted on his arrival at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. He was "the most radical member" and the cleverest of Tony Blair's Cabinet, a politician with vision and imagination, one of the best parliamentary orators of his generation. And now he was in power and he was going to change things in King Charles Street and in the view of the world as seen from that distinguished address.

Winds of change howled down the corridors. There was a mission statement. An "ethical" foreign policy was announced. Members of staff were invited to join this exciting adventure at a "pro-active mass meeting" - the very terminology was itself a measure of how much things were going to change.

David Puttnam made a video to put them in the mood. In the Foreign Secretary's office the stuffy old symbols of history and tradition were replaced with relevant modern businesslike symbols. Charles James Fox made way for Ernie Bevin. One Foreign Office official welcomed the arrival of some fizz in foreign affairs: Britain had offered competence without fizz for too long, he declared. It was all pronounced to be "a promising start".

Yet the list of disappointments and disasters regularly recited in the newspapers is long, very long: the Queen's trip to India, the Sandline affair, the frustration of his hopes of running for the post of Scotland's first First Minister, even his widowed mother's decision to spend Christmas with her deserted daughter-in-law rather

LIFE STORY

Full name: Robert Finlayson Cook
Origins: Born 28 February, 1946, at Bellshill, Lanarkshire. Only child. Father a teacher, from a working-class background, mother came from a landowning family.
Vital statistics: Aged 52. Twice married: Margaret Whitmore, medical consultant, with two sons, 1969-97; Gaynor Regan, his appointments secretary, 1998.
Education: Aberdeen Grammar, Edinburgh High and Edinburgh University (2:1 in English).
Parliamentary career: MP for Edinburgh Central, 1974-83; MP for Livingston since 1983.
Passions: "The two most exciting sights and noises I know are these: first, a large field coming into a steeplechase fence; the other is the clang of the tin-ballot boxes as they hit the floor on election night."
His critics say: "We've been waiting for Robin for 15 years. But he's retreated from just about everything he stood for." (to Labour MP).
His supporters say: "Cook has come to be seen by Labour members as the custodian of the party's conscience." (Martin Kettle).
Cook on himself: "Never, since I started out at primary school, have I ever thought I looked like Clint Eastwood."

than at Chevening. His few friends, who are greatly outnumbered by his enemies, ascribe this unfortunate course of events to a number of different reasons. There is little dissent, however, from the view that the break-up of his marriage to Margaret and the circumstances in which it took place made an initial impact from which the rest flowed.

"What has been really striking - starting is the word - is that somebody who was so dominant in the House of Commons in Opposition should have slipped as he has," one of his close political chums said sadly yesterday.

But another colleague, who knows him well, suspects that it is his success in Opposition that may have been part of the problem. There is, for a start, the point that throughout his progress onwards and upwards in the Labour Party, Cook has never much bothered with making friends at Westminster, cultivating the press or se-

curing for himself a coterie of loyal political supporters. In fact he did the opposite. His best friend is said to be John McCririck, the television racing commentator, with whom he can indulge his passion for the turf. That is more important to him by far than hanging around bars unnecessarily at Westminster in the hope of improving his image.

"Robin's great strength as an Opposition spokesman was his forensic skills. He almost matched ministers in performance of his briefs. So he appeared like a well-briefed minister in Opposition and now he appears the same in Government. But people's expectations of him were far higher. If Cook does well that's what you expect of him - and if he does not do as well as had been expected then there's some ill-disguised Schadenfreude," his colleague explained. "The trouble is that he's such an arrogant sod that few people are prepared to give him the benefit of the doubt."

Cook is genuinely puzzled at why he is considered arrogant or vain. Only a few months ago when discussing the vagaries of political fortune with Neil Kinnock - who understands the problem well - he is said to have shaken his head in bewilderment and said that he could not see why others thought him pompous.

His biographer, the BBC political correspondent John Kampfner, whose book *Robin Cook* has just been published, believes that it is possibly because he is actually so shy that he gives a misleading impression. He has a very difficult manner, of which he is very aware, Kampfner says, and he knows that the first impression that he gives is not favourable.

This has obviously helped produce the image of a rather prickly personality. But Cook also is clearly rather hurt by endless references to his appearance. He has a sense of humour in private, but it doesn't extend to jokes about himself. He would be deeply hurt to hear the gales of laughter that one Tony MP always gets when he tells the joke about Snow White, Tum Thumb and Quasimodo trying to get into the *Guinness Book of Records*. They are seeking certification as the most beautiful, smallest and ugliest Quasimodo fails to get into the book and comes out of the office saying: "Who's this chap Robin Cook?"

John Kampfner agrees that part of Cook's problem has been the range of enemies that he had managed to amass before taking office as Foreign Secretary. There were those in the Labour Party - most notably, of course, his long-standing rivalry with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, but there are plenty of others. There were those in the Tory Party whom he had chewed up and spat out when they were Ministers and there were officials, in the security services in particular, who resented his political stance. To that list he very quickly added civil servants in the FCO.

One story that is told relates how the former Permanent Secretary, Sir John Coles,



Foreign Secretary Robin Cook: "I have never thought my strength was my looks"

Brian Harris

asked the Foreign Secretary, after representations from the Secretary of State's Private Office, if he would please indicate by some means which papers in his red boxes he had read. His staff did not know unless he ticked a paper. Sir John explained. Cook is said to have replied: "If you think I'm one of those plodders like Hurd who reads everything." It was an ill-judged comment. His predecessor, Douglas Hurd, was a former Foreign Office official; he was the diplomat's dream.

The public relations disaster that accompanied his private life has seemed to follow him into his political life. Sometimes he attracted justifiable headlines - over the matter of replacing his former secretary, for example, with his then mistress, Gaynor Regan, now the second Mrs Cook - but one of his colleagues believes it was because he had become gaffe-prone. "Once you get a tag in the media for being accident-prone, then everything is interpreted that way," the minister says.

A friend finds this all the more remarkable because of the manner in which Cook has kept his place at the forefront of Tony Blair's "new" Labour Party, while not himself being a Blairite. "He has displayed for years a deftness of touch and a nimbleness around the thickets at the heart

of leading Labour policy. He has kept his credibility on the Left. But now everything has been extremely badly handled," the friend says.

His position has not been helped by his enemies at the Cabinet table either. Cook believes he has been victimised to some extent, that he has been briefed against by the spinners and, in some instances, by their masters - particularly of course, Peter Mandelson and Gordon Brown.

"He amassed quite a wide array of rivals and enemies, and that combination was quite potent," Kampfner says. "But they could only attack him when things started to go wrong for him. As soon as they did start going wrong he was in trouble. His problem in Government has been that he hasn't been able to do anything. He can't get anything through and it's a big problem: everything is basically being scuppered by other people."

It is an open secret that Gordon Brown was insistent that Cook should not be given an economic post after the election and that it has been increasingly difficult for the Foreign Secretary to put any of his high-minded policies into practice: he has been strapped for cash by the Treasury and his ethics have been consistently undermined by Number 10.

The difficulties of the ethical foreign policy are in some ways exemplary. Cook is a man of great political principle, but introducing ethics into selling arms to foreign states was always going to be tricky to put into practice. "An ethical foreign policy is a contradiction in terms," a distinguished MP opined. "You can have a principled foreign policy, but that's different."

So what next for this man who has many admirers, but few friends? He has been advised to keep his head down for at least the next year. He survived the summer Cabinet reshuffle - although there had been rumours that he might be sacked - and his friends hope that if he avoids further untoward publicity that he might restore his reputation and his credibility.

"His career is stalled at the moment," a Scottish MP says. "And what happens next will depend on what happens to other people." He meant Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. Cook has given up wanting to be Prime Minister, ruefully aware that it won't happen. He has even given up wanting to be Scotland's Prime Minister. But he still wants to be Chancellor. Whether his single-minded ambition will be enough ever to get him there is not yet at all clear.

JULIA LANGDON

ACCIDENTAL HEROES OF THE 20TH CENTURY

7: BETTE DAVIS, FILM STAR



IN THE late Fifties, when her career was on the wane, Bette Davis took a full-page ad in the Hollywood trade papers: "Mother of three, divorcee. Twenty years experience as an actress in motion pictures. Mobile still and more affable than rumour would have it. Wants steady employment in Hollywood. References upon request."

The gesture was typical of the actress. She didn't care. "An explosive little broad with a straight left," Jack L. Warner called her, as he might well after his courtroom battle with Davis in the Thirties. In the middle of a long-term exclusive contract with Warner, Davis fled to England rather than make more gangster flicks and screwball comedies like *Fog Over Frisco* and *Jimmy The Gent*,

which was "fast and flip, rough and rowdy," according to the *New York American*. Warner sued for breach of contract. Amazingly, Davis counter-sued, at a time when actors, let alone actresses, were considered mere chattels of the studio.

She lost, but she must have frightened the life out of Warner, because rather than punish her, he started casting her in more prestigious films, wet-Sunday afternoon classics like *Dark Victory* in which Davis plays a good-time girl who discovers she is dying of a brain tumour. In *Mr Skeffington* she was cast as a fading beauty with a blind husband, while *Now Voyager* was another doomed love affair with the memorable line: "Oh Jerry, don't let's ask for the moon. We have the stars."

When these melodramas, and others Davis made in the Forties, were called "women's pictures", it was usually meant pejoratively, but it could equally be used to describe the unique connection between Bette Davis and the female audience. She was perhaps the only Hollywood actress more adored by women than men. Brigid Brophy once compared her to Saint Teresa. That might be stretching it, as

a nondescript colour and your mouth's too small." She admitted her own lack of glamour: "I was the first star they allowed to come out of the water looking wet."

Davis was rarely lost for a salty quote. She never hid from the Hollywood gossip sheets details of her battles with studio bosses, establishing a reputation as feisty before the word was even in regular usage.

Stories of Davis's imperiousness did no harm to films like William Wyler's 1941 version of Lillian Hellman's *The Little Foxes*, in which Davis's wicked scheming Regina must have seemed tantalisingly close to the truculent drama queen ruling the roost on the Warner's lot.

It was an image she sent up hilariously in the gothic horror film

Whatever Happened To Baby Jane, which revived her career in 1962. She worked until she was 80 and heroically failed to mellow. Lindsay Anderson, who directed her last movie, said: "Directing Bette Davis was like playing with a very sharp knife."

Like most of our accidental heroes - of whom Homer Simpson is probably the only one truly at ease with himself - Bette Davis was driven by personal demons, notably a cruel father she was desperate to impress. That she never achieved.

In the attempt, though, she became a captivating and enduring presence on screen, while her life seemed to echo her famous words in the film *All About Eve*: "Fasten your seat belts. It's going to be a bumpy night."

THE WEEKLY MUSE

BY MARTIN NEWELL



Rusty in the sycamores
The spinners dawdle on the bough.
In windless days and cider haze
The sozzled wasps are tetchy now,
While in their Norfolk forest home
Sciurus vulgaris (squirrels, reds),
Well into summer's injury time,
Peruse the news and shake their heads:

"It's all these greys," a rodent said.
"They're oversexed and overfed,
They carry pox, they're violent, rude,
They take our jobs and nick our food,
And what would happen if your son
Announced he'd like to marry one?
It's you who'd have to take the flak.
I reckon they should send 'em back."

Not far away a father hid,
An outlaw since he'd whacked his kid.
Dead keen on human rights, his son
Had hauled his dad to court, and won.
The ruling that the judges made
Was that a ten-grand fine be paid.
Considering this regimen
My dad must owe me millions, then.

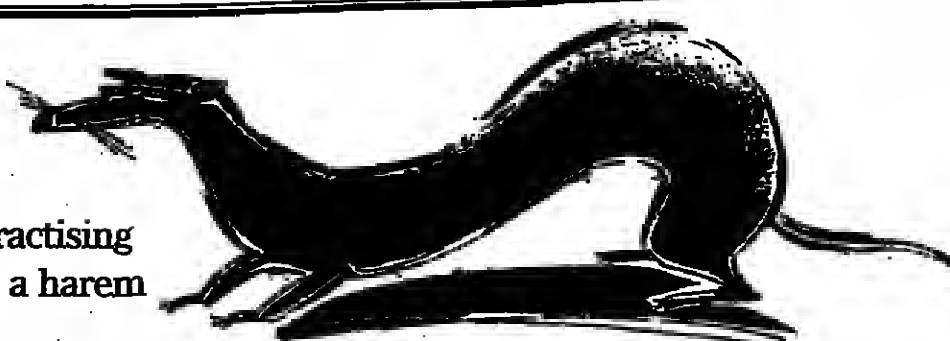
New socialism? Well, not quite.
From Mr Darling, Wednesday night:
"Money spent on schools and health
Will rise in future with our wealth,
So get a pension, don't be late,
You can't depend upon the state."
Which means that if you're old and ill
Your rulers won't pick up the bill.
I pondered on that one in bed,
Since that was what the Tories said.
New government - same cock and bull.
Darling, you were wonderful!

Abroad, the fearsome Hurricane
Georges snaps off a weathervane,
At home, a rustle in the hedge
Denotes his brother, Light Breeze Reg.
But quite a different type of wind
Blows in the media: "Ab have sinned."
As Stepford pushes sense aside
To watch Bill Clinton crucified.

Backstreet surgeons! Here's a chance!
Bored with doing breast implants?
Steady scalpel? Perfect vision?
Try your hand at circumcision!
The NHS may hand to you
Those cases which they will not do -
And lucrative are breasts and lips,
But circumcision gets the tips.

THE WEASEL

Having discovered a new lingua franca for Europe, I am practising for my role as sultan in the case of Weasel Villas becoming a harem



I was intrigued by the revelation that Sir Tufton Beamish attempted to lure the concert pianist Moura Lympany into matrimony with Edward Heath during his brief spell at No.10. The latter was thought to appear standoffish, perish the thought. Despite the honeyed words of this Tory cupid ("Ted must get married, will you marry him?"), wedding bells did not chime. In later years, bachelorhood did not prevent Sir Edward from becoming Father of the House.

Some time ago, however, Mrs W and I discovered the names of Sir Edward and Miss Lympany linked in an unexpected way. Touring the south-west of France, we visited the cave co-operative in the tiny village of Rasquies near Carcassonne. It turned out that local vignerons had produced two special wines that year to celebrate the community's music festival. The robust Cuvée Edward Heath (quite unpronounceable by locals) and the elegant Cuvée Moura Lympany both proved to be most acceptable, though I doubt if they would have blended.

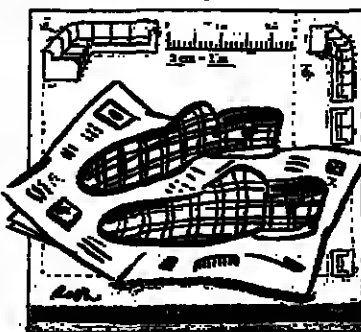
IN COMMON with a large chunk of the population, Mrs Weasel is deeply addicted to *Changing Rooms*, a voyeuristic re-invention of the DIY programme from the Bazalgette telly production line. If you've somehow managed to avoid it so far you can forget all thoughts of Barry Bucknall. This is the format: deeply domestic couple, consisting of eager woman and traumatised man, agree to undertake radical

makeover of room in neighbouring house, while neighbours do same to them. Each couple is assigned flamboyantly telegenic designer - *soigné* young man or Titian-haired beauty (often one and the same) - to mastermind metamorphosis. Giddy, manically smiling mini-celebs acts as referee. The working class is represented in the form of one Handy Andy, a maestro of the jig-saw, who, Mrs W informs me, has recently issued his collected *pensées* in book form.

It is in the nature of long-running TV series that a modest idea is inflated way beyond its viable limits in order to keep the ratings up. With *Changing Rooms*, the wilder inspirations of the chiffon-scarved creative types have been given free rein, usually with disastrous results. A humble attic is transformed into a gauze-swathed seraglio, where a suburban sultan may loiter on a mountain of satin cushions. An innocent dining room is unhappily re-born as the gallery of a deep-sea trawler with port-holes and imaginative assemblages of old rope. At the dread moment when the changes are revealed, most recipients evince a display of delight, slightly hysterical or dumb-struck according to sex. But on one infamous occasion, the gimcrack alterations were not welcomed. Frankly, the lady of the house was incandescent.

Entertaining enough, I suppose, but Mrs W makes greater claims for this bubble-headed *divertissement*. "It's very good for ideas," she says breezily. Doubtless this is also the reason for the tidal bore of journals, devoted to domestic decoration, which flows into

Weasel Villas. They contain an abundance of fruitful notions. The Javanese opium bed which fills most of a Hammersmith drawing room featured in *Homes and Gardens* will surely have readers instantly booking tickets for Jakarta. Similarly, the "pair of 18th century Venetian mirrors, said to be from the Vatican", which adorns a Palm Beach mansion in *The World of Interiors*, is bound to prompt a flood of visitors bearing shopping lists to Vatican



City. Meanwhile, the star attraction in *House & Garden* is a Parisian apartment stuffed with Swedish antiques from the era of Gustavus Adolphus.

You will be amazed to learn, however, that this flood of inspiration has failed to make much of a mark on Weasel Villas. Perhaps a pot stuffed with stems of dried lavender owes something to *Countryside Living*. Judging by the crumbling mountains of books, limitless strata of unironed laundry, the petrified forest of wine bottles and the dramatic lava eruptions of unpaid bills, bank

statements etc. threatening to engulf Weasel Villas, the most influential publication is the *National Geographic*.

When we returned from our unexpectedly prolonged northern break the other day, Mrs W determined to do something about this clutter which has built up over limitless aeons of geological time. Bearing some resemblance to Delacroix's *Liberty Guiding the People* (though maintaining a more respectable décolletage), she flung herself into battle. And what, you might enquire, was the master of the household doing to assist on this domestic D-day? Unfortunately, I am under strict doctor's orders to rest my recently infected leg. Never mind, I am determined to do my part. Should Mrs W choose to pursue the Byzantine motif suggested on *Changing Rooms*, she need look no further for a looting sultan.

THOUGH THE European Central Bank has taken the decision to decapitate the Queen on euro banknotes because "11 varieties of note would promote confusion", a far worse source of Euro-confusion remains unaddressed: the host of different languages babbling unchecked across the continent. It is high time that the European Parliament instituted a single language so that John Bull can swap recipes with Jean Dupont, and Jan van Rental can talk footie with Georgios Unscrupulos.

English would be the obvious choice, but for some inexplicable reason the French refuse to accept it as a lingua franca. However, I believe I have found the solution in a book called *Rapid*

Method of Neo: The International Language, published in Brussels in 1965. The author, one Arturo Alandari, presciently notes that Neo "aspires to be used for communication when the two mother languages differ too greatly for mutual comprehension".

A host of phrases in the book appear tailor-made for EU officials: It is small of him to bargain so long (*Il mesking presyecande, too long*). When pigs have wings (*Van boons or alos*). You are making a mountain out of a molehill (*Vu far un mont da kapuz*). In that country you can get anything by greasing the official's palm (*Kenlonde vu par obteni kelo tipyomande lo fanser*).

Mr Alandari also caters admirably for the rugged conditions which our Euro servants are obliged to endure. I want a first-class ticket for... (*Mi nesar un primklasa tiket po...*). We will begin with some oysters, washed down with some good white wine (*Nos encor pe ostros, arazat pe un bon alba vin*). Evidently a man of the world, Mr Alandari does not omit other appetites: I always had a liking for "weaker vessels" (*Mi sem ir libol pol sex debila*). Here all girls are unsophisticated (*Ik tot felos nosofistikak*).

But he includes valuable expressions for all occasions: Our house was levelled by the hurricane (*Vu dom sir ruzat pet uragan*). Wave my hair with the curling tongs (*Mie fu un fir-ondukaol*). I need a coal scuttle (*Mi nesar un karbosejoi*). Many a muckle makes a muckle (*Mul petruilos far un mule*).

And most useful of all: It's all Greek to me! (*Eto po mi Sanslerit*)

SPIRIT OF THE AGE

PAUL VALLELY

Embracing the Jewish tradition

MONDAY WAS the earth's birthday. It was Rosh ha-Shanah, the feast in which Jews celebrate the beginning of a new year. By the traditional rabbinic calculation, it is 5,759 years since the creation of the world. Geologists and astronomers may tell us differently, but let us not make the mistake of confusing the truths of science with those of poetry. "This is the birthday of the world, and one by one all creatures are questioned, either as children or as servants," began the Jewish prayer-book, with a heady beauty.

"Judeo-Christian heritage" is one of those phrases which trips nimbly from the lips without a tremendous amount of thought. Whenever I use it, I feel a fleeting embarrassment that I don't actually know enough about Judaism to judge whether the concept has any real meaning. (There are those who insist that the values and theology of the two faiths are so divergent that the idea of a common inheritance is a sloppy secularism.)

So when Edward Kessler, the director of the new Centre for Jewish-Christian Relations, which opens in Cambridge next week, invited me to the Rosh ha-Shanah service at the Reform synagogue in Cambridge, I accepted with alacrity.

Orthodox Jews in Cambridge have their own synagogue, but the Reform tradition hold their weekly services in a local community centre. When, as on high holy days like this one, the worshippers' numbers swell from scores

to hundreds, they become the guests of Wesley House Methodist Theological College which, as it was to turn out, was oddly apt.

In the old library, at one corner of the lawn quadrangle, a children's service was beginning, when I arrived with Ed and his three offspring. It seemed a good place for a beginner like me to start, too. It being Cambridge, the sabbath school teacher was a professor of philosophy, Peter Lipton, who was asking the cross-legged children why they used Hebrew in the services.

Their answers reminded me what was said about Latin during my own pre-Vatican II Catholic upbringing. It was not the language of everyday, so it was sacred and special, said one boy. It was the language that God spoke, said a young girl. But it was also, I thought, a foreign language which spoke of divided loyalties and partly accounted for the suspicion and antipathy which Jews have encountered throughout European history, much as did Papists in post-Reformation England, and Muslims do today.

The session lasted an hour, and if the professor's teaching on *The Three Ts* - *teshuvah*, *teshuvah* and *teshuvah* (charity, repentance and prayer) - was a little dry, he ended, in approved Jewish fashion, with a story. The tale was of a boy called Elihu, who in his dreams is visited by souls of the dead, who each tell him: "Only you can save us, Elihu." The children were enrapt.

If there is one thing more important than story in Judaism, it is ritual. The laws on diet and on sabbath observance, set out in its late-medieval code of ritual, the *Halakah*, are well-known, but there is much else. The children's service ended with a practice for the blowing of the *shofar*, the ram's horn, which was later sounded dozens of times in the three-hour adult service, to awaken the faithful from their slumbers. At Rosh ha-Shanah, the wicked are inscribed in the Book of Death, and the completely virtuous in the Book of Life. For the slumbering in-betweeners, judgement is suspended for the 10 days of penitence leading up to the holiest day of the year, Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.

There was, for me, an odd dissonance about the adult service. There was a strangeness in the tasselled prayer-shawls and skullcaps which were worn by men and women alike. There was an unexpected chill about standing in the midst of a people who could begin a prayer with the words "We who lived in concentration camps..." And, in the primitive, almost comic, squeak of the ram's horn, I could not hear the shattering of illusions behind which "a still small voice is heard".

But there was also an odd sense of familiarity, too. Not just in hearing the Jewish prayers which Christians have appropriated, as with the Aaronic benediction, which I had always assumed to be Celtic in its rhythms: "May



Blowing the shofar, the ram's horn, in traditional Jewish ceremony

the Lord bless you and keep you; may the face of the Lord enlighten you and be gracious to you; may the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace."

It was also there in words which have become part of the warp and weft of modern English allusion. "Man comes from the dust, and ends in dust. He spends his life earning his living, but he is fragile, like a cup so easily broken, like grass that withers, like flowers that fade, like passing shadows, and dissolving clouds, a fleeting breeze and dust that scatters, like a dream that fades away." All in all, I felt so enfolded in a part of my past that, when I felt a tap on my shoulder halfway through the service, and turned to discover an old friend from two decades back, it

seemed an appropriate surprise.

The heart of Judaism, of course, is not in the synagogue, but in the home. It is the place of *halachic* practice but, more than that, of the celebrated warmth and cohesiveness of the Jewish family. It is often mocked as claustrophobic, but there was nothing of that in the Kessler household. Thanks to the untiring efforts of Ed's wife Tricia - a convert from Catholicism - the house was, after the service, for the entire day open to a continual stream of visitors to share tea, coffee, wine, hunch and the apples-with-honey which are traditionally offered along with good wishes for a sweet year ahead.

If there is no such thing as a Judeo-Christian inheritance, I decided, it is time that we created one.

DAYS LIKE THESE

27 SEPTEMBER 1915

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (right) writes from Pourville, near Dieppe, to his publisher Jacques Durand:

"We shall be returning to Paris about the 12th of October. Farewell sea, farewell tranquillity! I am definitely ready for life beneath the open sky, among mute trees. Big cities frighten me, one is obliged to shake too many dirty hands. It is not disgust or misanthropy, but the need to concentrate what's left of my powers of thought which The City casually fritters away. Think of the ghastly reporters who try to advertise your plans even before you've been able to realize them!"

1 OCTOBER 1719

GEORGE SHELVOCK, mariner, records an incident while rounding Cape Horn (a passage that Wordsworth pointed out to Coleridge when he was composing "The Ancient Mariner"):



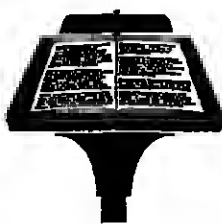
"At 7 in the evening, as they were furling the main-sail, one William Camell cry'd out, that his hands and fingers were so benumbed that he could not hold himself, but before those that were next to him could come to his assistance, he fell down and was drowned.

The cold is certainly much more insupportable in these, than in the same latitudes to the Northward, for although we were pretty much advanced in the summer season, and had days very long, yet we had continual squalls of sleet,

snow and rain, and the heavens were perpetually hid from us by gloomy dismal clouds. In short, one would think it impossible that any living thing could subsist in so rigid a climate; and indeed, we all observed, that we had not had the sight of one fish of any kind, since we were come to the Southward of the straits of le Mal; nor one sea-bird, except a disconsolate black Albatross, who accompanied us for several days, hovering about us as if he had lost himself, till Hattley, my second (Captain) observing, in one of his melancholy fits, that this bird was always hovering near us, imagin'd, from his colour, that it might be some ill omen. That which, I suppose, induced him to the more to encourage his superstition, was the continued series of contrary winds, which had oppress'd us ever since we had got into this sea. But be that as it would, he, after some fruitless attempts, at length, shot the Albatross, not doubting that we should have a fair wind after it."

IAN IRVINE

End this grotesque chaos



CLASSIC PODIUM

From Neil Kinnock's speech to the Labour Party conference at Bournemouth, in which he attacked the activities of the Militant Tendency (1 OCTOBER, 1985)

I SHALL tell you again what you know. Because you are from the people, because you are of the people, because you live with the same realities as everybody else lives with, implausible promises don't win victories.

I'll tell you what happens with impossible promises. You start with far-fetched resolutions. They are then picked into a rigid dogma, a code, and you go through the years sticking to that, out-dated, misplaced, irrelevant to the real needs, and you end in the grotesque chaos of a Labour council - a Labour council - hiring taxis to scuttle round a city handing out redundancy notices to its own workers.

I am telling you, no matter how entertaining, how fulfilling to short-term egos - I'm telling you, and you'll listen - you can't play politics with people's jobs, and with people's services or with their homes. Comrades, the voice of the people - not the people here; the voice of the real people with real needs - is louder than all the boos that can be assembled. Understand that, please, comrades. In your socialism, in your commitment to those people, understand it. The people will not, cannot, abide posturing. They cannot respect the gesture-generals or the tendency-tacticians.

Comrades, it seems to me lately that some of our number have become like latter-day public school-boys. It seems

it matters not whether you won or lost, but how you played the game. We cannot take that inspiration from Rudyard Kipling. Those game players get isolated, hammered, blocked off. They might try to blame others - workers, trade unions, some other leadership, the people of the city - for not showing sufficient revolutionary consciousness, always somebody else,

and then they claim a victory. Whose victory? Not victory for the people, not victory for them. I see the casualties; we all see the casualties. They are not to be found among the leaders and some of the enthusiasts; they are to be found among the people whose jobs are destroyed, whose services are crushed, whose living standards are pushed down to deeper depths of insecurity and misery.

Comrades, these are vile times, under this Tory Government, for local democracy, and we have got to secure power to restore real local democracy. But I look around this country and I see Labour councils, I see socialists, as good as any other socialists, who fought the good fight and who, at the point when they thought they might jeopardise people's jobs and people's services, had the intelligence, yes, and the courage, to adopt a different course. They truly put jobs and services first, before other considerations.

They had to make hellish choices. I understand it. You must agonise with them in the choices they had to make - very unpleasant, totally undesirable, but they did it. They found ways that would best protect those whom they employed, and those whom they were elected to defend.

Those people are leaders prepared to take decisions, to meet obligations, to give service. They know life is real,

life is earnest - too real, too earnest to mistake a Conference Resolution for an accomplished fact; too real, too earnest to mistake a slogan for a strategy; too real, too earnest to allow them to mistake their own individual enthusiasms for mass movement; too real, too earnest to mistake barking for biting. I hope that becomes universal.

Comrades, I offer you this counsel. The victory of socialism, said a great socialist, does not have to be complete to be convincing. I have no time, he went on, for those who appear to threaten the whole of private property, but who, in practice, would threaten nothing; they are the purists and, therefore, barren.

Not the words of some hypnotised moderate, not some petrified pragmatist, but Aneurin Bevan in 1950, at the height of his socialist vision, and his radical power and conviction.

There are some who will say that power and principle are somehow in conflict. Those people who think that power and principle are in conflict only demonstrate the superficiality, the shallowness, of their own socialist convictions - for while they are bold enough to preach those convictions in little coteries, they do not have the depth of conviction to subject those convictions, those beliefs, that analysis, to the real test of putting them into operation in power.

27 9 1915

THE SATURDAY ESSAY

Popularity is fine, but it's not what makes art great



STEPHEN BAYLEY

Quality will out is what we elitists believe: how one winces when a programme says 'not performed since 1782'

Sitting on a panel assembled to select products to put in the Dome as pointers for the direction of industry in the early years of the next century, I found myself next to an engineer. You could tell he was a brute because he was wearing a tie. Well, anyway, a particular sort of tie. It was a form of time travel, although back to the Fifties rather than fast-forward to the 21st century. One candidate for inclusion was a newly popular piece of street lighting that was vividly endorsed by its manufacturer as incorporating new advances in luminescence, and a record of exciting high levels of cupid among normally placid local-authority road engineers. It was dismissed by me for being absolutely hideous to look at. My brutish engineering neighbour was nonplussed. But it's got awesome candle-power, he said, adding that it meets EU environmental standards for luminaries to 2006. I replied that this was all very well, but that it had no aesthetic content. He said: "That's just your opinion". I stabbed the table and said rather crossly, with histrionic emphasis on crucial syllables: "I am here for my opinions. And, besides, just what is wrong with opinions, anyway? It has taken me 25 years of diligent observation and reading to form mine". Here was patiently acquired expertise being dismissed by a callous philistine. Or, to put it another way, here was a trenchant demonstration of elitism. Mine.

"Elitist" is a period term of contempt now enjoying something of a vogue. It is ritually invoked to stigmatise anyone who happens to prefer the best or claims to be able to identify second best. As an insult, its force depends on the assumption that the victim of the slur has a privileged and exclusive definition of what "best" is. An additional assumption is that we exist in a value-free miasma where the only politically correct approval is acceptance by the market, or what New Labour calls "The People". So, if our focus group prefers *Friends* to *La Grande Illusion*, then it is elitist to claim that Jean Renoir is better. Against the educated snobism of interpretation and analysis are gathered the grim forces of statistics. In our frighteningly authoritarian People's Britain, elitists are dissenters.

But aren't the purposes of civilisation itself best served by the pursuit of excellence? I like George Steiner's justification of expertise. In a bravura cocktail of crushing arrogance and superiority, with a nice dash of resonant bombast, he explained recently:

"The difference between the judgement of a great critic and that of a semi-literate censorious fool lies in its range of inferred or cited reference, in the lucidity and rhetorical strength of articulation or in the accidental addendum which is that of a critic who is a creator in his own right." I wish he had been there to explain about the streetlight.

It is curious how many of the expressions we use to identify extremists come from the French. Along with the elite (which originally, and rather poetically, meant the choicest part of a flower) we have chauvinism and the avant-garde, a term for the advanced guard of the army appropriated for the coquettish European culture by modernists during this century. Yet, while few positions are as reviled as the elitist's, few things are now more dated than the avant-garde. The penetrating vanguard has given way to a vast middle



Bob Dylan's lyrics, reaching the level of authentic poetry, bridge the gap between high and low culture

ground of popular culture. The great adventure of the 20th century is the democratisation of art through mass media and mass production. The distinctive art forms of the 20th century are the factory-outlet cultures of industrial design, rock music, photography, fashion and film. Rather as Brillat-Savarin said of the chicken, that it is to the cook what an empty canvas is to the painter, so mass production and the mass media are new tools for the creative artist. But these powerful multipliers don't obviate the need for judgement and criticism.

Great art - Michelangelo, Shakespeare, Verdi - has always been popular, but not necessarily at the time of its introduction, although it is probably true to say that, whatever medium you choose, there are no undiscovered masterpieces. Quality will out is what we elitists believe: how one winces when a concert programme says "not performed since 1782". But popular acceptance is only a characteristic of great art, not a definition of it. Vermeer was scarcely known in his own day. Eugene Sue was once considered a better writer than Balzac, and Telemann's contemporary popularity easily outstripped Bach's. While Edna St Vincent Millay's verse used to be more read than Ted Hughes'.

This confuses dimbulb enemies of elitism. At his best, Bob Dylan's lyrics reach the condition of authentic poetry. Indeed, insofar as authentic poetry is probably no more widely studied than authentic harpsichord is nowadays practised, Dylan's Sixties lyrics - mass-produced and universally distributed on records, tapes and CDs - have more of a hold on the imaginations of the literate than salon

poetry, in any case a dead medium. Never mind the economy of Dylan's extraordinary imagery, which would remain remarkable even if it were carved in bark in a limited edition of one, it would be ridiculous to deny that its successful reproduction into millions of copies both enhances and confirms the quality of the original.

Yet the whole oeuvre of Tupac is not as good as 10 minutes of *The Marriage of Figaro*. If this is an elitist opinion then there is a rational basis for it. The repetitive, hypnotic, tribal loop-bloop of gangsta rap appeals to the pre-adolescent and the uneducated and, in certain rare moments of felicity, can even momentarily divert those over 14. That's what we call an elitist view. And so is this: while Mozart was, at his worst, a glib populist hack, at his best he was a composer of unequalled genius. And you could say the same for McCartney. *Figaro* has been revered for two centuries.

It is witty, yet profound. Melodious, but thought-provoking, and has a range of psychological expression beyond even the murky Oedipal complexities of chanting about a muthafuka.

On the other hand, for all its manipulative, saccharine cheek-sucking whimsy, *Eleanor Rigby* exceeds in artistic value anything irritatingly cacophonous by Arthur Schnitzke or Pierre Boulez. Why? Because it introduced an audience hitherto largely ignorant of poetry and the cello to these joint delights and did so in an imaginative, popular and uncompromisingly modern way. It is also remembered. Hum a little Schnitzke? You can't. No one can.

Or take a sophisticated modern car: the new Ford Focus for example. It is not elitist speculation to talk about the subtle and complex aesthetic considerations that went into the design. Sensibilities that can only be described as sculptural were

continuously involved: the car's designers understand the language of form and can use it expressively. They appreciate the relationship between planes and radii, between details and the whole. With this language, metal can be made articulate. Like advertising, car design is a collaborative activity rather than an individual one, so lacks the individual authorship which defines creativity, but at the same time each powerfully apes the effect of art. The Ford Focus is a satisfying visual confection which commands attention. A Benetton ad by Oliviero Toscani requires you to refocus on the world. The same cannot be said of every car and poster. There are degrees of excellence in pop culture, as in the canon of literature.

Durability is the first great test of quality in art and here Philip Larkin's way of judging a novel can be developed for universal applications: "Could I read it? If I could read it, did I believe it? If I believed it, did I care about it? And if I cared about it, what was the quality of my caring, and would it last?"

The second test involves the sort of league table that elitists enjoy. There are identifiable standards of excellence. There are ways of measuring the effect of art and the quality of that effect. The American sociologist, Herbert J Gans did it a quarter-of-a-century ago in his book *Popular Culture and High Culture* (see box). Industrial processes democratised the fine arts into design and rock and movies, but the question of judgement remains. The position was succinctly put by George Santayana in *The Life of Reason* (1914): "Culture is on the horns of dilemma; if profound and noble it must remain rare, if common it must become mean".

On one horn we have the common Chris Smith (and his East German-sounding Department of Culture, Media and Sport) and on the other, the rare Peter Conrad. Conrad is the mondan Lecturer in English at Christ Church, Oxford. In his formidable new book, *Modern Times, Modern Places* (Thames & Hudson, 1998, £24.95), he sets out to explain how the radical technologies and revolutionary politics of the 20th century have changed the perceptions of artists. Yet in a book of more than 750 pages, the index contains no reference to Coco Chanel, the century's greatest fashion designer; Harley Earl, the Michigan mogul who invented car styling; John Lennon, who merged rock with surrealism; Terence Courran, who brought the Bauhaus to the High Street; Elizabeth David, who in teaching the British about authentic ingredients gave an unforgettable lesson in taste; Eliot Noyes, whose advice to IBM's Thomas Watson Jr that "you would prefer neatness" literally changed the face of American business; to Akio Morita, whose Sony Corporation popularised the transistor; to Curnonsky and Michelin who established the contemporary idea of tourism; or to Ferdinand Porsche, the great automobile engineer.

On the other hand, Conrad has time for Hermann Minkowski, Hans Pfitzner, Kuri Blossfeldt, Berenice Abbott and Andrei Bely. Maybe their contributions to culture are the stuff of everyday conversation at Christ Church high table, but one reading of Conrad made me yearn for some popular context. Yet the alternative is surely not the Pooterish maunderings and celebrity glad-handing of Chris Smith who, in his lamentable book, *Creative Britain* (Faber, 1998, £7.99) also lacks an entry for "Chanel, Coco" but compensates with seven for "Channel 4". He says the Turner Prize is a success because it's on the telly, but does not bother to mention what tosh it all is. Here Smith also announces his scary corporatist belief in "creative industries".

Maybe the great contemporary media tend to acquire collaborative effort of an industrial sort and maybe this puts the idea of the autonomous individual artist under scrutiny. Certainly, the factories of Pininfarina put modern sculptors to shame when it comes to creating everyday beauty. But there's something else, too. Whatever the medium, great art must always astonish. As Charles Eames believed, the designer must give the public what he wants, not what he merely expects. Miles Davis said "Don't play what's there, play what's not there". It's as simple and as complicated as that.

BAROMETER

SALLY CHATTERTON

Winners of the Week

Our four-legged friends win paws down this week. First we hear news of the world's first millionaire cocker spaniel. The fragrant canine, Samantha, inherited her owner's £5m fortune while his live-in (two-legged) lover, described as his "good friend" is left pinning back the dog's ears for the rest of its life for a paltry £40,000 per year. Samantha may be man's best friend but she is certainly not woman's. Then, later in the week, pets and Jilly Cooper rejoiced at the proposed advent of the "passport for pets", the culmination of Screaming Lord Sutch's vision, "because pets need a break too". I am sure Buddy the First Pet would be the first to agree. Meanwhile, better watch out for those unaccompanied Mynahs.



Loser of the Week

Yesterday, the loser of the decade removed his disguise, waved good-bye to special branch and officially came out of "hiding" for the first time since 1989 at a press conference to mark the Iranian government's dissociation from his personal fatwa. Rather than being good news for the arch self-publicist Salman Rushdie - who has not, apparently, missed a party these past nine years - I imagine this rather marks the end of his notoriety. Now that there is no chance of Islamic extremists breaking up a party, the flow of invites will surely run dry and he may well have to go back to writing books.



Fad of the Week

The dieting fad has grabbed the world by its love handles again this week. From the amazing slimming pets in Russia, to the leader of the sugar-free world's endorsement of a certain soft drink (pictured) and the arrival on our shores of the latest lifestyle enhancing drug, Xenical (we can now have our cake and eat it), it would seem that it is not just pro-Europeans who want to lose the pound.

Sweet of the Week

The Alford, hottest mint in the world, favoured by Monica Lewinsky for inappropriate breath freshening.

Image of the Week

Elizabeth R was on the ball this week, literally. Mid-Manchester coup, our gracious monarch took time out to sign a Manchester United fan's football. Perhaps she has been taking the recommendations of Doreen just a step too far. And was she aware that as she was putting marker to leather a furrow was raging in Britain about the loss of her head? Still, it may be Charles' head we are doing without by the time we enter the single currency.



FOUR LEVELS OF CULTURE?

High culture

Interest in creative process and symbolism; preference for experimentation; introspection preferred to action; accepts different levels of meaning.

Upper-middle culture

A less literary verbal culture; figurative and narrative art preferred, especially illustrative of individual achievement or upward mobility.

Lower-middle culture

Form must unambiguously express meaning; demands conclusions; unresolvable conflicts not made explicit.

Low culture

No concern with abstract ideas; form must be entirely subservient to content; demands crude morality with dramatic demarcations.



Beryl Bainbridge - shortlisted again for the Booker Prize

"HELLO BERYL. Are you OK for a chat?" "Just a minute, Jack," replies Beryl Bainbridge, possibly Britain's most eccentric novelist. "I'm seeing someone out." In the background, there is a commotion. Her guest is apparently manoeuvring himself around the large stuffed buffalo in her narrow hallway.

"How lovely," declares Beryl as she returns. "That was A N Wilson. He just dropped in to say congratulations." Beryl is delighted with herself. Her latest novel, *Master Georgie*, has been shortlisted for the Booker Prize. "I've been lying down. I get terribly excited the day they announce the shortlist. It's always between 3.30pm and 6.30pm. You can't bear to be away from the phone. So

I attacked the vodka. Then I had to go out to dinner. Now I'm feeling very groggy, but cheerful."

But isn't she worried about being once more the bridesmaid, never the bride? This is, I mention, her fifth shortlisting - a record. Yet she has yet to win Britain's richest literary prize. "Oh, no. That doesn't bother me," she says. "In the old days, ours was the only table at the Booker dinner enjoying ourselves. We didn't think we would win, so we had a good night out. My publisher didn't mind, because it meant he didn't have to print any more books."

But wasn't winning the big prize always her dream. "No, no," says Beryl. "You see, I wasn't part of that world. Growing up, I didn't know

COLD CALL

JACK O'SULLIVAN
RINGS
BERYL BAINBRIDGE

anyone who was a writer. Until about 12 years ago, I didn't realise books were translated. I thought Proust wrote in English. When I was 15, I was mad about Francois Mauriac. I didn't realise the books were originally in French."

So she doesn't get embarrassed about repeatedly being a runner-up? "I'm just embarrassed if I don't get on the shortlist, especially if

everyone says the book will make it. I'm embarrassed, not for myself. It's for the publishers that I get *agitated*, because the Booker means so much in terms of sales. Now I feel fine. I can relax. Once I've got over today, I'll be back writing again."

There's another knock at the door. "Oh dear," says Beryl. "Hold on." And, in the background, a voice booms out. "What's that bloody horse doing in your hall?" "It's not a horse, it's a buffalo," comes a faint reply, as the door is swiftly closed. "Oh dear," laughs Beryl, as she picks up the phone again. "That was a bit scary. People just don't seem to have any respect these days."

Clearly, I say, her success in being shortlisted is valued. Surely

she aches then for all-out victory. "Well I have won in the past," she says. "I won the Whitbread once, maybe for *The Dressmaker*. I can't remember. I got a cigarette case with my name on it. I put matches in it, and my uncle's medal from the First World War."

"Actually, I've suggested to the Booker that they should give medals to the runners-up. Usually, I buy something just for myself, something to keep."

And this year, I wondered, what will she be buying to mark her latest shortlisting? "Not this time. I don't need anything anymore," replies the slightly weary Booker veteran. "At my age now, I'm shedding things."

EMMA COOK VISITS A MINK FARM WITH ANIMAL RIGHTS ACTIVIST MARK GLOVER

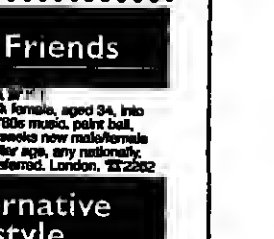
Emma Cook with Mark Glover, the animal rights activist behind Respect for Animals, who was refused entrance to the mink farm. Above left: the mink are kept in cages, until they are killed by carbon dioxide poisoning for their fur

imals in a cage, then? What conditions were they in. Did they all have tails?" Yes, I think so. "Mmm. And at least four or five to a cage," he says. "Sounds like a possible case of over-breeding. Call me a conspiracy theorist, but it's very convenient considering what's happened..."

We head back to the car, trying to spot any stray ink that may have eluded Len's grasp. Mark is on the mobile phone, keeping animal HQ updated. "Mission accomplished," he whispers. "We're coming back."

Does Mark feel it's been a successful mission? "Mmm," he says. "I always want to be able to look back and say, 'At least I tried.'"

FAX: 0171 293 2505



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Patrick Sargent

THE SUDDEN death of Patrick Sargent at the age of 41 deprives the pottery world of one of its more provocative, iconoclastic and creative spirits.

Paradoxically, Sargent was both revolutionary in outlook and ambition yet an arch-romantic, searching for an almost unattainable wholeness in his work and life. The great potter Michael Cardew divided the work of potters into those obsessed by clay and those with flame – and there was little doubt into which group Sargent fell. Acknowledging his profound involvement with flame, he said “the long fire encompasses an element as potentially creative as the initial lump of clay”.

Even as a mercurial, occasional ceramic student at West Surrey College of Art and Design at Farnham in the late 1970s, Sargent was obsessed by fire and the effects of flame, and spoke with affection of his time spent at college “with a much used and abused hole in the ground”. Under the guidance of his tutors Henry Hammond, Paul Barron and Gemma Bontempo, Sargent was encouraged to pursue his own ideas, setting the foundation for his work as a potter. He experimented with local clays to make up bodies, played about with different sorts of kiln construction and fringes, and explored the use of natural materials such as wood ash in the glaze, which has the effect of combining with the surface of the clay to give softly coloured but often dramatic effects.

Much of his creative inspiration came from the ancient Far Eastern technique of long slow wood-fired firing, known as anagama, which marks the clay with the effects of flame and smoke in a unique combination of colour and texture.

Following college, where he graduated with first class Honours, Sargent established workshops in his home town of Northampton, where with his wife Olive and their young daughter Lisa he sought to establish his own voice, building kilns for himself as well as other potters. Rural Northampton did not prove conducive, and, after a visit to Germany, in 1989 he moved to Nyffell in Switzerland, the native country of his second wife, Renate Badertscher.

Here he began to find himself. On a hillside he built an enormous single-chambered climbing kiln with a firing chamber of some five cubic metres, ca-

and the intimate relationship between potter and pot.

For Sargent the cycle of making pots, of packing and firing the kiln, and the long wood-firing process was not only a way of life but a means of retaining the freshness and freedom of the newly thrown piece whilst capturing the possibilities offered by flame. His precedents were the Japanese traditional country potteries such as Tamba and Bizen where pots are kiln-marked, mottled and marked by the flame or enhanced by fly ash from the wood used for stoking to highlight areas of the surface.

By careful positioning in the kiln, Sar-

brilliantly and with such breathtaking conviction.

Much of Sargent's success lay in his choice of forms which were intended to respond well to any possible firing effects. A variety of bottles and bowls were produced as well as handsome platters that ranged in size from a modest 12in dinner plate to vast pieces some 24in or 36in in diameter. Some shapes borrow loosely from the relaxed casualness of the Japanese tea ceremony, some from the sturdy jug forms of medieval England, but all were transposed and reinterpreted in Sargent's highly individual style.

The power of these intriguingly flamboyant pieces brought growing international acclaim, and in 1991 he was made a Fellow of the Craft Potters Association. In the same year he was one of a group of potters demonstrating at the Aberystwyth International Potters Festival, his long blond, bearded locks and his decorative pierced earrings making a lasting impression as he systematically and rhythmically wedged the clay on the floor with his feet before quietly throwing his pots.

With a combination of shyness, arrogance and sensitivity, Sargent fearlessly explored the extremes of firing, opening new possibilities, in a search for some fundamental truth about “naturalness” expressed through making, clay and fire.

EMMANUEL COOPER

Patrick Nigel Sargent, potter; born Northampton 28 September 1956; married first Olive Redhead (one daughter; marriage dissolved), second Renate Badertscher; died Heimisbach, Switzerland 4 September 1998.

Sargent fearlessly explored the extremes of firing, in a search for some fundamental truth about ‘naturalness’ expressed through making, clay and fire

pable of holding two and a half months work, and christened it “The Mule”. For many potters it would have been a daunting task to construct, let alone fill with pots and fire over a period of several days, but for Sargent it was a welcome challenge and the realisation of a long-held dream in which he could bring together his interests in clay, flame and heat.

Typically, rather than invoke the more alienating machinery of the electric wheel, Sargent chose to throw his pots on a momentum wheel, which is pushed with the foot and moves silently round, savouring the use of soft clay

gent hoped to allow the greatest creative interplay of flame, clay and wood ash. Pots were placed on their sides, others stood on seashells, while plates and dishes were arranged inside each other for maximum exposure. The resulting, often dramatic encrustations and swirling textures of hard and soft markings, loose and crisp forms imbued with a range of soft pinks, white blushes, rich dark browns and cream all serve as evidence of the pot's history.

It is this combination of the natural and the contrived, the fine line between the happy accident and great sophistication, that Sargent handled so

HISTORICAL NOTES

HENRY PHILLIPS

State of independence and tranquillity

DR HASTINGS Banda, the founder and first President of Malawi, was portrayed by the media as a ruthless tyrant. Yet he was cleared of wrong-doing by the courts and when he died last October he was eulogised by those who had opposed him and buried in Hero's Acre.

Born in Nyasaland (as Malawi was then known), he spent 40 years abroad. He was infuriated by the British government's decision in 1953 to include Nyasaland in a federation with the two Rhodesias notwithstanding the expressed opposition of African politicians. They did not want to be governed by white Rhodesians who reckoned that the “native” was incapable of participating in government. Their spokesmen were young and inexperienced. They looked for a charismatic leader. They persuaded Banda to return to his country to take up the cudgels.

This he did in 1958 and demanded immediate secession from the federation and independence from Britain. His brilliant oratory inspired his followers to hazon this message throughout the country, often resulting in disturbances necessitating police and later military intervention with some fatalities. Banda and his activists were imprisoned without trial for 13 months. Once he was released a series of meetings with British ministers provided stepping stones towards the achievement of Banda's objectives.

Membership of the federation however had provided Nyasaland with additional financial resources and secession would have left a formidable budgetary deficit. To achieve his ends it was necessary to extract from the British the promise of a subsidy. By quiet negotiation Banda got his way. Indeed, Britain decided to dissolve the federation on 31 December 1963.

Independence followed for Malawi on 6 July 1964. It had taken him precisely six years. He ruled for 39 years, fortunate to have inherited the outgoing colonial government's plans for the establishment of an infrastructure for industrial development and for the exploitation of the country's principal asset, its fertile soil. Banda united the tribes behind him and created a one-party state. He was thus able to make full use of the party hierarchy to persuade his people to extract the maximum benefit from the products of the soil. To the same



Banda was buried in Hero's Acre

end he visited different parts of the country every planting season, even in his old age. Roads and railways appeared where none had existed before, air transport facilities and telecommunications were vastly improved, many small industries took advantage of a welcoming regime, a new capital city was built and its predecessor turned into a university campus fed by a growing number of secondary schools. Above all there was peace.

Before long, however, Malawi's human rights record came under severe international criticism. The Young Pioneers Banda had allowed to be established assumed a quasi-military role and were responsible for beatings, even killings, and destruction of property. Criticism mounted and Banda bore the brunt. He eventually saw the light, disbanded the Pioneers, introduced multi-party democracy and consequently lost the ensuing election.

Although there is no evidence to suggest that Banda personally sanctioned these outrages he cannot, as head of state, avoid the ultimate responsibility. An autocrat he certainly was. People were imprisoned without trial and their assets sequestered. Yet in contrast he was quick to provide sustenance and shelter for a million refugees from the civil war in Mozambique. And under his regime some eight million Malawians were able to live in relative tranquillity – in stark contrast to events elsewhere on the African continent. And tranquil that little country remains.

Sir Henry Phillips is the author of *From Obscurity to Bright Dawn* (Radcliffe Press, £24.95)

How real is President Clinton's contrition?

ONE OF the recurring themes of this year has been the number of public proclamations of contrition. Recent examples include the Queen's reported desire to learn from the criticism of the British people after the death of Diana, David Beckham's promise not to kick out again and, of course, Bill Clinton's apology to everybody.

Proclamations of remorse serve not only to apologise to the offended party but are also offered in the hope that the life of the penitent can return to normality as quickly as possible. But, does saying “sorry” guarantee a passport to normality? Is a statement of remorse equivalent to being repentant?

In sum, what is repentance? Repentance is an apt subject for this time of year, not only because of the recent public displays of penitence, but also because Jews have just celebrated Rosh Hashanah, the New Year, and are soon to commemorate the holiest day of the Jewish calendar, Yom Kippur, also known as the Day of Atonement. One of the unusual aspects of the Jewish New Year is that it is not celebrated with parties, streamers, inebriation and loud music; rather, it is a sober period of introspection. The New Year represents the crossing of the threshold from the past to the future and serves to increase our awareness of human dependence on God. At New Year, and during the 10 days leading up to Yom Kippur, Jews are commanded to show penitence, consider their actions carefully and ask God for mercy.

This is not an easy option. The ancient rabbis offered a warning at this time of year: “The Day of Atonement brings pardon for sin if there is repentance but it is ineffective if a man says ‘I will sin and Yom Kippur will effect atonement.’” This means that it is not enough to say, “I’m sorry”. We have to do something about it. In Judaism penitence is summarised in one word – *teshuvah*, which literally means returning. The motion of turning implies that sin is not an immovable stain but a straying from the right path and that by

the effort of turning the sinner can redirect his destiny. “Return unto Me and I shall return unto you, says the Lord” (Malachi iii, 7). God urges Israel to repent and not to be ashamed to do so because children should not be ashamed to return to a parent who loves them (Deuteronomy Rabba ii, 24).

Such *teshuvah*, according to Jewish teaching, will result in God's forgiveness, for God desires our repentance. The rabbis describe God's appeal to Israel in these words: “My sons, open for me an aperture of repentance as narrow as the eye of a needle and I will open for you gates through

True repentance is no mere momentary spasm of remorse to be proclaimed in front of the cameras until it is safe to creep out again. To be worthy of the name, repentance must influence character, action and life. True repentance ends with something which must be based upon transformation rather than an eloquent public apology.

In practice, this means that we should not only acknowledge our sin before God but should also apologise to the person we have offended. Moreover, such an apology demands a positive response from the offended party. Judaism teaches that the person who has received the apology should forgive the penitent. Once remorse has been shown, and repentance offered, both the offender and offended must move on. Ben Sira, a Jewish philosopher who lived over 2,000 years ago explained:

Forgive your neighbour their wrong-doings; Then your sins will be forgiven when you pray. Shall humans cherish anger against another, And yet ask healing from the Lord? (Ben Sira xxxviii, 2)

Who has Bill Clinton offended? Certainly his wife and family, and who in the public world can say what transformation he has effected in his relationship with them. So what is the appropriate response when the sinned-against feels itself to be the general public which then also demands an apology? This is not so easy; for what exactly is the nature of the offence? What restitution is it appropriate for him to offer – and will that public extend, in return, the forgiveness which is required of it?

In such circumstances we should carefully consider our response to these public acts of remorse. We should not delude ourselves that we are any better. It is worth remembering the prayer of another famous Jew: “Forgive us our sins; for we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us” (Luke xi, 4).

Edward Kessler is Executive Director of the Centre for Jewish-Christian Relations, Cambridge

which wagons and coaches can pass through” (Song of Songs Rabba ii, 2).

In religious terms repentance is a prerequisite for divine forgiveness and mercy – God will not pardon us unconditionally but waits for us to repent. In repentance, we must experience genuine remorse for the wrong we have committed, cease to do evil and then convert our penitence towards acts of goodness. This is where many people who envelop themselves with public cries of sorrow fail. They make public apology but fail to begin the second crucial stage: to direct their penitential energy into positive action.

GAZETTE

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

DEATHS

GARRIE: Roshi John, died peacefully Tuesday 22 September 1998, surrounded with Loving Kindness from his students near and far. May he be well and happy.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

Princess Margaret today attends the first day of the Ascot Festival at Ascot Racecourse, Berkshire, and presents the Queen's Trophy for the Queen Elizabeth II Stakes.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

TODAY: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am; 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards mounts the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Coldstream Guards. **TOMORROW:** The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 10am.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS are charged at £8.50 a line (VAT extra).

BIRTHDAYS

TODAY: Miss Lucette Aldous, prima ballerina, 80; Ms Elizabeth Blackman MP, 49; Mr Leslie Bennett, comedian, 60; Mrs Margaret Bryan, former ambassador to Panama, 69; Lady Casson, architect, designer and lecturer, 85; Mr Ian Chappell, cricketer, 55; Mr Neil Coles, golfer, 64; Mr Bryan Ferry, rock singer and songwriter, 53; Dr Ian Gibson MP, 60; Lord Griffiths, a former Lord of Appeal in Ordinary, 75; Air Commodore Joy Harris, former director, Nursing Services, RAF, 72; Sir James Hennessy, former diplomat and Chief Inspector of Prisons, 75; Dr Julian Lewis MP, 47; Mr Peter Lewis, former chairman of the John Lewis Partnership, 69; Mr Ellyn Llywyd MP, 47; Miss Olivia Newton-John, singer, 50; The Rev Professor Ernest Nicholson, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Oxford University, 60; Mr Richard Pendered, former chairman, Pange & Co, 77; Mr George Pasack, former chairman, Mobil Oil, 78; Marshal of the RAF Sir Denis Spotswood, 82; Miss Margaret Thomas, artist, 82.

TOMORROW: Miss Diane Abbott MP, 45; Mr Louis Auchincloss, attorney and writer, 81; Dame Josephine

Barstow, operatic soprano, 58; Sir Roger Birch, former Chief Constable of Sussex, 68; Mr Philip Blacker, jockey, 49; Baroness Blackstone, Minister for Education and Employment, 56; Mr Michael Colvin MP, 66; Miss Barbara Dickson, singer, 50; Miss Michele Dotrice, actress, 50; Vice-Admiral Ian Garnett, Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic, 54; Mr Kenneth Gill, former president, Saatchi & Saatchi, 78; Sir Alexander Graham, former Lord Mayor of London, 60; Mr Nicky Haslam, interior decorator and designer, 59; Sir Peter Holmes, former chairman, Shell Transport and Trading Co, 66; Mr Gordon Honeycombe, writer and broadcaster, 62; Sir John Hunt, former MP, 69; Mr Denis Lawson, actor, 51; Professor Geoffrey Martin, historian, 70; Miss Barbara Murray, actress, 69; Mr Robin Nedwell, actor, 52; The Rev Professor Dennis Nineham, theologian, 77; Mr David Peake, former chairman, Kleinwort Benson, 64; Mr Arthur Penn, theatre and film director, 78; Mr Ian Penderleith, Government Broker, 55; Dr Margaret Rule, consultant, Mary Rose Trust, 70; Lord Shepherd, former Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Lords, 80; Mr Alvin Stardust, rock singer, 56.

ANNIVERSARIES

TODAY: Births: Ivan Petrovich Pavlov, physiologist, 1849; Sir Barnes Wallis, airship and bomb designer, 1887; Thomas Stearns Eliot, poet and playwright, 1888; Martin Heidegger, philosopher, 1889; Pope Paul VI (Giovanni Battista Montini), 1897; George Gershwin (Jacob Gershwint), composer, 1898; Deaths: Bishop Lancelot Andrewes, theologian, 1626; James Keir Hardie, Labour party pioneer, 1915; Bela Bartok, composer, 1945; Hugh John Lofting, author and creator of “Dr Doolittle”, 1947; Alberto Moravia, writer, 1990. On this day the Venetians destroyed the Parthenon in a bombardment, 1687; Lord Rothermere became the principal proprietor of the *Daily Mail*, 1922; the liner *Queen Mary* was launched by Queen Mary, 1934; sugar rationing ended in Britain, 1953. Today is the Feast Day of St Columban of Land-Elo, Saints Cosmas and Damian, St John of Meda and St Nilus of Rossano.

TOMORROW: Births: Sir William Empson, poet and critic, 1906; Sir Martin Ryle, Astronomer Royal, 1918. Deaths: William of Wykeham, founder of Winchester College and New College, Oxford, 1404;

Hilaire-Georges Edgar Degas, painter, 1917; Aimée Semple McPherson, evangelist, 1944; Aristide Maillol, painter and sculptor, 1944; Gerald Finzi, composer, 1956; Dame Gracie Fields, singer and entertainer, 1979. On this day: the Society of Jesus was founded, 1540; Mount Ararat was climbed for the first time, 1830; Constantine I abdicated as King of Greece, 1923; the liner *Queen Elizabeth* was launched by Queen Elizabeth, now the Queen Mother, 1938; Hitler announced his intention to annex the Sudetenland, 1938; the first London performance of the musical *Hair* was presented, 1968. Tomorrow is the Feast Day of St Barrog or Barnoch, St Elzebar of Sabran and St Vincent de Paul.


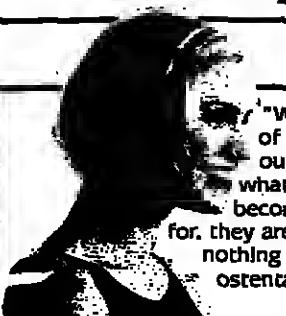




LECTURES

TODAY: Victoria and Albert Museum: Pippa Skidley, “Forges and Foundries: the golden age of decorative ironwork”, 2pm. National Portrait Gallery: Jill Nott-Bower, “Charles Causley”, 3pm.

TOMORROW: Tate Gallery: Laurence Bradbury, “Turner's Indistinctness: fault or forte?”, 2.30pm.

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

BY FIONA STURGES

<div> <div>EXCELLENT</div> <div>GOOD</div> <div>OK</div> <div>POOR</div> <div>DEADLY</div> </div>					
OVERVIEW	CRITICAL VIEW		OUR VIEW	ON VIEW	YOUR VIEW...
THE FILM THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY  <p>Cameron Diaz and Matt Dillon star in the Farrelly brothers' latest offering, the story of a man who finds himself still in love with his high school Prom date 13 years on.</p>	 <p>"While instances of puerile, gross-out humour are what the movie is becoming notorious for, they are actually nothing more than ostentatiously vulgar embellishments on a very ordinary love story," grumbled Ryan Gilbey. "(This) is as bad as it gets," snarled Time Out. However, The Guardian surmised: "an example of post-modern stupidity... created by clever people, therefore to be taken as a healthy antidote to tight-arsed political correctness."</p>		<p>The makers of <i>Dumb and Dumber</i> have finally hit rock-bottom in toilet humour with this oafish and often excruciating comedy. Nothing short of a lobotomy will make it enjoyable.</p>	<p>There's <i>Something About Mary</i> is out on general release. Certificate 18, 119 minutes.</p>	<p>LUBNA ATTIA, 23, television producer, Ealing "I just discovered I hate machines. It is so cold, it makes you think about speed and scares you. It disturbed me. I did not enjoy it at all."</p>
THE TV PROGRAMME OMNIBUS  <p>Mischa Scorer's 'Omnibus' feature looks back upon the careers of eccentric septuagenarian couple, dancer Zizi Jeanmaire and her choreographer husband, Roland Petit.</p>	<p>"Jeanmaire still appears in high-camp song-and-dance extravaganzas and can get her foot up on a level with her ear," noted Serena Mackesy, adding, "Dance programmes usually bore me. This one didn't. Now if I were only 10 years younger..." The Times found it "hard to believe that Petit's choreography was thought so sexually explicit that it made those early London audiences gasp. Those sizzling, erotic poses would barely earn footnote-space in Kenneth Star's report today." The Daily Telegraph expressed reservations: "An ideal programme would have included more objective analysis of their work and its standing. Still, this was hard to resist."</p>		<p>Despite her years, Zizi is still in possession of great Gallic allure while her husband oozes rakish charm. If a little indulgent, Scorer's feature was an engaging portrait of the dance world's odd couple.</p>	<p>There are no more planned showings of this programme. Next week's <i>Omnibus</i> (10.30-11.15pm, Mon) investigates Images of the cat on stage.</p>	<p>JAMES READ, 33, artist, Oxford "It was a very loose theme in there. It was more a set of ideas. It did not seem to have a theme. It was a good overview of 20th century culture but lots of the more cerebral work does not need to be in a gallery."</p>
THE BOOK ETHEL & ERNEST  <p>After a four-year silence, Raymond Briggs, creator of <i>The Snowman</i> and <i>Fungus the Bogeyman</i>, returns with a comic-strip version of his parent's life.</p>	<p>"This is no ordinary book, although at first sight it could pass for one," noted Nicholas Tucker. "Open any page, and there is immediate colour, shape and atmosphere. This book would certainly qualify as social history for the National Curriculum in schools." "No one twangs the nation's heart-strings quite like Raymond Briggs," said</p>		<p>The Times, "...a work of Kleenex Mansize proportions." "Its charm, its fun, its sense of period, and the sure-footedness of its character, will leave most novels standing," raptured the <i>Evening Standard</i>, while the <i>Mall on Sunday</i> praised its "evident sincerity and an indisputable depth of feeling."</p>	<p>Packed full of domestic detail, Briggs's enchanting labour of love provides a personal and social record of London life between the Thirties and Eighties. A guaranteed best-seller.</p>	<p><i>Ethel & Ernest: A True Story</i> by Raymond Briggs is available in all bookshops priced £14.99 (Jonathan Cape).</p>
THE PLAY LA RONDE  <p>David Hare's hotly-anticipated version of Arthur Schnitzler's Viennese play, <i>La Ronde</i>, sees Hollywood favourites Nicole Kidman and Iain Glen in the title roles.</p>	<p>"If there is any unusual frisson to Sam Mendes's breathlessly chic new production, it isn't because of the frank depiction of dangerous liaisons, but because of the casting," enthused David Benedict, while the <i>Daily Telegraph</i> heaped on the praise: "Mendes directs with precision and wit... this most humane of directors also finds</p>		<p>moments of unexpected warmth undreamt of by Schnitzler." The Times noted: "Kidman is excellent, varying from sensuous au pair to power-mad diva."</p>	<p>Here's up-to-date version of Schnitzler's tale is beautifully executed by Kidman and Glen, under the exacting direction of Sam Mendes. Getting a ticket won't be easy, but well worth trying.</p>	<p><i>The Blue Room</i> is on at London's Donmar Warehouse, Covent Garden, until 31 October. For enquiries, call 0171-369 1732.</p>
THE OPERA JENUFA  <p>Directed by Katie Mitchell, the Welsh National Opera perform Janacek's opera at Cardiff's New Theatre, conducted by British <i>Wunderkind</i>, Daniel Harding.</p>	<p>"There is no drastic reassessment, but the tone is precise and the detail authentic," observed Stephen Walsh. "It is baffling that Mitchell, who comes from the world of the theatre, should have been party to this retrograde, musically snobbish and - dare one say - elitist artistic decision," spat The <i>Sunday Times</i>, "robbing Janacek's drama of its</p>		<p>immediacy and accessibility." The <i>Sunday Telegraph</i> disagreed: "It packs a comparable emotional punch and left this listener drained and shattered. The pathos of the music, with its exposure of raw nerves quivering in every bar, was projected with overwhelming dramatic force." It's back to the theatre for Katie Mitchell.</p>	<p>A sadly mediocre performance of Janacek's pacy composition strikes yet another blow to the sorry state of opera.</p>	<p><i>Jenufa</i> is at the New Theatre, Cardiff, 7.15pm until 3 Oct. For bookings and enquiries (0122) 287 8889.</p>

DOUBLE REVIEW

Pierced humanity engulfed in murk

Paul Taylor reviews 'Hamlet' and Judy Upton's 'Confidence' at Birmingham Rep

WITH THAT prankster-cherub face and those subversive goateer eyes, Richard McCabe communicates a wonderful spirit of suppressed anarchy as a performer and develops a terrific rapport with an audience. Having made his reputation with memorable performances as Shakespearean comic characters - Puck, Autolycus, Touchstone - he now graduates to the hero who is, in a sense, a profound comedian miscast in a revenge tragedy.

Taking the title role in Bill Alexander's gripping and unsettling production of *Hamlet* at the Birmingham Rep, McCabe brings an expertly-edged, goading levity to the Prince's "antic disposition". He parades about in a night-gown which he gawks inside, to check the state of play with his genitals, at the line:

"That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs". Ordered to leave for England, he treats an appalled Claudius to a satirically-lascivious kiss and slips off in a parody of camp, carefree gaiety.

Full of sudden false-footing mood switches, the performance never lets you lose a sense of the hero's pierced humanity. The Elsinore that oppresses Hamlet is unwaveringly conveyed here as a cavernous shadowy world, littered with whispering young

spies - the action taking place on a murk-engulfed wooden thrust-stage that stretches back to a sinister lone door in the far distance. Brutal-looking, but also given to brief fits of panic-weeping, Gerard Murphy - playing the ruler of this realm - is quite the best Claudius I've ever seen. You can almost feel the character's brains and guts knotting from the passionate sweaty intensity with which Murphy's Claudius enacts the tortured wrestlings with the

problem of repentance. And there's a wonderfully unsavoury comic bluntness about the way this King manipulates Laertes (Martin Hutson) into believing that he is making the running in the plot against Hamlet.

The text has been cut in an odd manner so that we get the admittedly excellent, yet rarely played scene between Polonius and his spy Reynaldo, but no sight or mention of Fortinbras, the man of action who helps highlight the value of

Hamlet's coterminativeness. His absence makes for an unduly sentimental ending. This is, nonetheless, a sweeping, urgent account of the tragedy and strongly recommended.

In the Rep's studio theatre - now given a new look and a new name, The Door - the autumn season of writing gets off to an amusing yet slightly disappointing start with *Confidence* by the prolific Judy Upton. Seaside towns seem to be for her what daffodils were for

Wordsworth, not to mention what depravation was for Larkin. *Ashe and Sand*, for example, which woo her the George Devine Award, focused on a violent girl-gang in a washed-out resort. In *Confidence* the havoc along the prom is created by one girl, Ella, an erotic accident-zone who is played with a startling mix of don't-give-a-shit cool and witty insolence by talented newcomer, Jody Watsoo.

"Do you want to be the kicker or

the kicked?" asks a character. Ella wants to be the person who can pay someone else to kick the kicker and, as she embarks on a scheme of tricking tourists into taking boat trips to see a couple of bogus motorised dolphins, she strings along more men than she can manage.

Anthony Clark's production is beautifully acted but I became irritated with the relentless quirky humour and the characterisation - Ella enjoys frozen chocolate bars in the same way Monica Lewinsky enjoyed cigars. By comparison with *Ashe and Sand* or *Bruscs*, which was a bleak comic exploration of how domestic violence is passed on from generation to generation, *Confidence* fails to convince you that there is anything major at stake, while displaying bags of eponymous virtue.

CLASSIC CARTOONS

MARTIN PLIMMER ON
DAVID AUSTIN

IN A world without pictures, prolific gag man David Austin would still be funny. His captions (example: "Mind if I passive smoke?") are usually entertaining enough by themselves. This focusing talent has made him one of our most successful pocket cartoonists. He's even better, though, when he allows a little visual indulgence, depicting Peter Rabbit grown fat and indolent on excessive royalties, or a centaur visiting his parents with a bunch of flowers and a carrot. Then, his already loose pen can skip the leash. Here, the idea is as neat as ever, but the drawing is intoxicated



by an apocalyptic madness. The computer Error banner is apparently carried by Lord Kitchener, and that, unaccountably, makes it funnier.

Carry on cackling

THE WEEK IN ARTS

DAVID LISTER

IT WAS strange sitting behind the real Barbara Windsor at the National Theatre for the opening of Terry Johnson's *Carry On*. *Cleo*, *Comping*, *Emmanuelle* and *Dick*, while on stage her alter ego was both seducing and being seduced by the Sid James character. Would the real Barbara laugh, cry or sue? Well, she was crying at the end, as she is the only one of the central characters still alive. But it was interesting to note at which points she laughed. The first came when it was remarked on stage that things were so bad on the set that Charles Hawtrey nearly sobbed up. But I was more intrigued to hear a barely stifled giggle when an on-stage heavy sent by her husband said to the Sid James character: "It's not that Ronnie minds you owing him money. It's not that Ronnie minds you shagging his wife. It's your shagging his wife when you owe him money." Barbara Windsor, I gather, had seen the script and tweaked it a little. And if that's what she was happy, indeed mightily amused, to leave in, I'd love to see the out-takes.

DORIS LESSING has turned her formidable pen to opera critics, and it makes juicy reading. Ms Lessing, still apparently smarting from the mauling 10 years ago for Philip Glass's *The Making Of The Repertoire*, for which she wrote the libretto, has written a piece for the journal of the Friends of the English National Opera. She recalls: "I have never read anything so venomous, so poisonous. (Philip Glass's) experience with opera has been that critics damn a first showing of a piece, but when the next one appears they damn that,

saying... it is not as good as the last! Is it that some critics have in them a well of malice they need to empty from time to time?"

So can the ENO hail Ms Lessing as their champion? Not totally. In her next paragraph: "More than one production I have sat through with my eyes closed, unable to bear it."

CULTURE SECRETARY Chris Smith wants art taken out of the galleries and brought to the people. He is being taken at his word by textiles artist Anna Sheppard, who is putting on a display of her wall sculptures next week in Soho hairdresser, Tommy Guns Haircuts, in Beak Street. The sculptures are constructed from hairgrips, oets and rollers. Next week, the public will be allowed to view the exhibition, and no doubt to gaze at the bewildered people being shampooed.

ROYAL OPERA House chairman Sir Colin Southgate may not save quite as much money as he thinks when he closes down the Royal Opera company next year. The Royal Opera House will have to pay all the principal singers they have engaged, unless they find other work. One national opera promoter tells me: "Find an Italian tenor or his agent who will admit to another engagement when he can be paid for not singing with the Royal Opera!" I call that cynical, xenophobic

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Mick Martin, The Guardian Guide

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THE BOOKS INTERVIEW

Gone fishing, for the truth

Charles Nicholl tracks down James Hamilton-Paterson, the elegant absentee, in deepest Tuscany

Authors are not the most clubbable of creatures, but few are as conspicuously missing from the literary scene as James Hamilton-Paterson. His books are highly regarded, and he has won his share of prizes – the Newdigate Prize for poetry and a Whitbread award for his novel *Gerontius* – but he is a loner by temperament and an exile by choice, and is more likely to be found spearing fish on a desert island than chipolatas at a publisher's party.

Now in his late fifties, he left England for good over 20 years ago. "It wasn't so much a rejection of England," he says, "as a rejection of boredom. And the two have now become synonymous to me." For much of the year, he lives in a small bamboo house in a remote province of the Philippines, and shares (up to a point) in the elemental, laborious life of the local fishermen and farmers.

"Subsistence throws things into bright relief," he explains. "At the end of the day's work either there are fish and maize cobs to be laid over charcoal or there are not. There are no hidden deals. Everything – shelter, food, water – is plain." This passage in a recently published piece, "Sea Burial", suggests something of his life there, and also something of the crisp resonance of his prose.

When he is not in the Philippines he lives on a hilltop in southern Tuscany – "the unfashionable end," he insists – and it was here I met him on a hot, drowsy day in August. It is another of his hide-outs, a model of inaccessibility. "Dropped in on James H-P" is unlikely to feature in a Tuscan socialite's diary. First, there is the rendezvous at a roadside bar in the Val di Chiana, and then the long, lurching ascent in a Toyota pick-up, climbing through forest on a rock-strewn track which is in fact a dried-up riverbed.

The way he sits at the wheel suggests that this is the kind of driving he likes. He is very fit-looking, without being noticeably tall or muscular; he wears nondescript hot-country shirt and shorts; his public-school accent (King's, Canterbury, and Oxford) has now the faintly fossilised vowel-sounds of the long-term expat.

We pull up at a small stone farmhouse perched on a grassy plateau: a brief garden with old walnut and persimmon trees, a line of washing strung from the trellis, and a massive sweep of view southward to the shores of Lake Trasimeno. He lives here alone with his bees and a huge grass-snake which resides on the lid of his water tank.

Considering his hermit-like tendencies, he is a remarkably genial host. His conversation has the qualities of precision and wit found in his written word. There is more of the scholar about him than I had anticipated. With his silvery hair, he has sometimes an almost monkish look – but if so, a monk in the hard-bitten Oriental tradition: the forest monk, or the wayfarer like the Japanese haiku-poet Basho, whom he much admires.

The interior is simple – "I'm actually not that interested in mod cons" – but has the comforts of a wood-stove, a well-stocked library and an electronic piano. "I find a Bach partita sets one up for the day." He is an accomplished musician and once toyed with the idea of composing. "I'll probably end up one day teaching the piano to little girls in platts," he says, improbably.

Music plays an important part in his books. A collection of his short stories is simply called *The Music*; his novel *Gerontius* is an imaginative treatment of an unlikely historical episode: Sir Edward Elgar's 1923 journey up the Amazon by steamship



JAMES HAMILTON-PATERSON, A BIOGRAPHY

James Hamilton-Paterson was born in London in 1941. At Exeter College, Oxford, he won the Newdigate Prize for Poetry. He went on to study education as a postgraduate at King's College, London. He taught English in Tripoli in the 1960s, before returning to England

to work as a porter and operating-room technician at St Stephen's Hospital. In 1974, after six years working as a freelance journalist for the *Times Literary Supplement*, *New Statesman*, and the *Sunday Times*, he left England, and now divides his time between the Philip-

pines and Italy. He still travels extensively. His published work includes novels – *Grief Work*, *Gerontius* (1989) which won the Whitbread Prize – short stories, children's stories, poetry, biographies and a book about the sea, *Seven-Tenths*.

to visit the opera house at Manaus.

Hamilton-Paterson's most memorable and personal book is *Playing with Water*, an account of his life in the Philippines, published in 1987 and now issued in a new edition (Granta, £6.99). One is hooked right from the gorgeous opening sentences: "The places a writer writes are always somewhere else. He may describe a jour-

ney, a foreign land; but no matter how faithfully he disposes his rocks and trees, his tokens of difference and the humdrum exotica he comes to love, certain delinquent breezes drift through landscape and writer alike, disheveling things at their root."

Much of the book concerns the village where he still lives, in a rural backwater near the southern end of Luzon. In his

books he calls it Kansulay. He tries to sum up its appeal: "It's Nowheresville by the Sea. It's because it's so nondescript I like it... You can see how it works. You're not part of it, but you can see how it works."

The book is also about a tiny and totally deserted island, Tiwarik, where he lived for a while, doing the full Crusoe bit, but this has now an elegiac note, as the island

has since fallen victim to the global blight of tourism, and has become something called the Fantasy Elephant Club, which has been described as a "Japanese middle-management bordello".

Playing with Water is the more remarkable for its subtle modulation into veins of childhood memory and autobiography. It is a unique kind of memoir-as-reverie, in which an almost bygone England is refashioned in the distance and silence of exile. He now comments, self-deprecatingly: "I'm not an autobiographical sort of person. You've either got to have done something really memorable or you've got to be a grand old fart, and I'm really neither."

His latest book, published this week, is *America's Boy: The Marcoses and the Philippines* (Granta, £20). This is essentially a piece of hard-nosed political journalism – he worked as a journalist in Indo-China and Latin America in the 1970s – but deepened by his strong personal connection with the region. It is by no means a rehabilitation of the Marcoses, but it certainly challenges some of the easier stereotypes.

The inhabitants of "Kansulay" and elsewhere provide insights into the Filipino view of the Marcoses, which is by no means the same as the prevailing Western view. In order to understand the Marcoses, he says, you have to "get out into the villages, and work out where it all came from and why".

"The book was actually written out of a kind of anger: this constant sense that the place I knew was being misrepresented, often," he says. "Not grossly, but just enough to skew the portrait so as to be almost unrecognisable." He dislikes the "parachute journalists" who drop in for a few days and recycle the same old half-truths. He dislikes the so-called "new journalism", which seems always a form of self-advertisement. "I'm not interested in T. I want the meat. Where's the beef?"

Above all, he dislikes what he calls the "Jokey Brits in the Amazon jungle" school of travel-writing. "I just can't bear it. It makes me come over all serious, which is actually the last thing I am. I get stuffy about it. I don't like the joke at the expense of natives, that's what it really is. I feel it's a very dated kind of trope. It's basically saying that they're actually rather urbane and sophisticated, rather witty and well-educated chaps, and they ain't."

America's Boy is tautly written and meticulously sourced: a lot of legwork and local knowledge has gone into it. It is particularly good, and funny, on the mythologising aspect of the Marcos regime – the "politics of fantasy", as he calls it. Perhaps the most surprising figure in the book is Imelda Marcos, whom Hamilton-Paterson met and interviewed in 1987.

He places Imelda in her social context, an impoverished young woman in an ethos of "stiffing Spanish Catholic proprieties weirdly allied to the sort of American aspirations exemplified in Lucille Ball sitcoms". And he empathises with her fierce if narrow ambitions; one glimpses some kind of humanity behind the kitsch extravaganza of her political persona.

In a few weeks, James Hamilton-Paterson will migrate back from Tuscany to the Philippines: a bird of passage moving in an enviable zone of freedom. This divided life seems further to ensure his preferred condition of solitude, of marginality. He does not quite belong to either place. "I'm one of life's interlopers," he says with his disarming smile – a smile which somewhat conceals the intensity of his gaze, and makes light of the loneliness that comes with the freedom.

COVER STORIES



THERE WASN'T a dry eye in the house when, 10 years ago, the Whitbread Book of the Year was won by Christy Nolan for his memoir *Under the Eye of the Clock*. Now in his mid-30s, Nolan – mute and paralysed since birth, and who writes, a letter at a time, with a unicorn stick – has written a novel, *The Banyan Tree*. His agent Giles Gordon describes it as a mix of Joyce, McGahern, O'Connor, Banville and all those other great Irish voices. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, who published his first book, snapped it up eagerly and the novel is expected to be the talk of Frankfurt early next month.

THERE AREN'T too many singers who can claim to have wowed the bobbysoxers and gigged at Glastonbury. Indeed, the *New York Times* suggested that Tony Bennett "has not just bridged the generation gap – he has demolished it". All of which suggests that his autobiography, *The Good Life*, will be a Christmas bestseller. Publication by Simon & Schuster is scheduled for mid-November and will coincide with the release of a CD marking his 50th anniversary in showbusiness.

AS THE Reader's Digest Association attempts desperately to attract readers, it is raising cash by selling off some of the 8,000 canvases bought by founders De Witt and Lila Acherson Wallace. The couple endowed a wing at the Metropolitan Museum of Art but the bulk of their patronage is on display at the company's HQ in New York State. The paintings, shortly to be sold at Sotheby's in New York, include works by Monet, Chagall and Van Gogh.

PRINCE CHARLES heads towards his 50th birthday and the publication of yet another version of Anthony Holden's biography, together with a new, official, account of his life by James Morton. Sneaking up on the outside, not in HarperCollins's catalogue, is an updated study by one of the Prince's chief apologists, Penny Junor. The publishers are claiming it is "explosive," not a word that one would normally see appended to anything by Miss J. Meanwhile, Will Carling's biography, due from Hodder, promises to "lay bare all the speculation about his private life and his friendship with Diana, Princess of Wales".

AS THE fight for book-buyers' wallets intensifies, the ante has been upped again with the news that US giant Barnes & Noble has been eyeing up the Simpson building in Piccadilly. The store's closure has already been announced and the owners are looking for bids. Simpson's will close its doors in March on one of London's prime retail sites.

THE LITERATOR

Carry on up the Channel

Adam Newey uncovers a bedroom farce when Jerry comes to Guernsey

IT IS late 1943. The German army has suffered a brutal reversal on the Russian front, with unimaginable numbers lying dead in the snows along the Volga. Meanwhile, at the other end of the continent, in occupied Guernsey, Major Lentsch is worried about the moles infesting the lawn of his commandeered cliff-top villa. Though he finds Stalingrad playing on his mind, he is more immediately concerned about keeping fellow officers in check – the ambitious head of security, Captain Zepernick, the officious labour chief, Major Ernst – and about the party his girlfriend Isobel is giving to mark his return from leave.

But when Isobel, the daughter of the wealthy Anglo-Dutch engineering contractor responsible for building the island's fortifications, is found dead at the bottom of a bunker shaft, Lentsch sets out, with the aid of the local police chief, to discover whodunit. German soldiers, resentful of Lentsch's liaison with the island's most eligible young flapper? Islanders, outraged at Isobel's horizontal collaboration? Or one of the nameless army of slave labour-



Island Madness
by Tim Binding
Picador, £15.99, 360pp

ers who carry out the fortification works under inhuman conditions for Isobel's father? The solution turns out to be more prosaic. Along the way, however, Tim Binding draws on the relationships between Germans and locals, occupiers and occupied, to elaborate his central theme: the nature of collaboration in war and the moral accommodations we make in order to survive.

Ned Luscombe, the police chief *malgré lui*, has to implement German orders while ob-

sessed by memories of a fling with Isobel. The bank manager and his daughter run a sex ring with German sentries. The local aristocrat, Mrs Halli-vand, enjoys dinners *à deux* with the cultivated Lentsch. Zepernick uses his sexual conquests to further his career.

Equally, the willing local gals – "Jerrybags", as they were termed – scheme to "catch" a German officer and thus improve their social standing (and get a bit of sugar off the ration). There is, indeed, an inordinate amount of bonking in this book.

One problem with the historical novel is that it invites reviewers to look for inaccuracies. While Binding has evidently done his research, there are plenty here. For instance, though he properly depicts a Henschel engine pulling wagons along the sea front, he calls it a "Hirschel"; the Germans use the local post and banking systems, where in fact they had their own; and so on.

But this is a novel, not a history, and such solecisms will not offend most readers. Rather worse are the stylistic infelicities. Binding does not have the greatest ear for dialogue, and

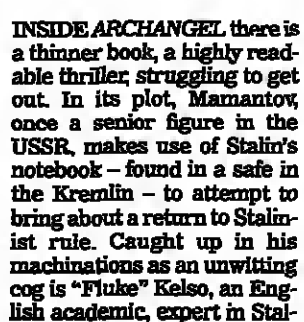
especially not for the rhythms of the Guernsey idiom. Most of the locals end up sounding like Ealing comedy mockneys, while the German officers, even when talking among themselves, are too often rendered in clipped sub-Colditz English.

Again, this would not matter excessively were it not that the narrative moves mainly – in between the rumpy-pumpy – through interior monologue and reported speech. And it has the related effect that characterisation tends to be implausibly thin. The German officers come across as beer-swilling dullards, icily efficient ideologues or wistful sophisticates: all good stereotypes, but not the stuff of original drama.

Binding's theme is a compelling one, but his treatment of it suffers because these just aren't believable people facing credible dilemmas, prompted by comprehensible motives. It is absurd to expect of a historical novel that it be accurate in every detail, but it must be a viable version of the truth; something that could perhaps have happened. *Island Madness* is not it.

A long trek back to Stalin

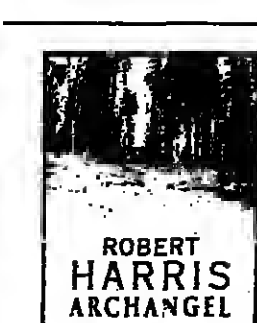
Julian Rathbone enjoys a cunning, if lengthy, hunt for Soviet secrets



Robert Harris
Archangel
Hutchinson, £16.99, 421pp

INSIDE ARCHANGEL there is a thinner book, a highly readable thriller, struggling to get out. In its plot, Mamantov, once a senior figure in the USSR, makes use of Stalin's notebook – found in a safe in the Kremlin – to attempt to bring about a return to Stalinist rule. Caught up in his machinations as an unwitting cog is "Fluke" Kelson, an English academic, expert in Stalin's USSR and the ordinary guy at the centre of this story.

Archangel is page-turning entertainment. The background, in Stalin's Russia as well as the present, is utterly authentic and presented with an ease and relevance not always achieved by Robert Harris's competitors. The writing is strong enough to make you feel you know what it must be like to be in a night-club in Moscow, or in a sick, broken city like Archangel as the first heavy snow falls and the cold begins to thicken the water across the river. And, in spite of a plot that creeps somewhat in order to get everyone in the right place at the right time, it rattles along, a lot faster than the train from Archangel.



Robert Harris
Archangel
Hutchinson, £16.99, 421pp

However, a certain portentousness in the writing, and the fact that it is longer than it need be, seem to imply that Harris and his publisher want us to take *Archangel* seriously, both as a novel with literary stature and as an analysis of Russia. This won't do. For a start, the central characters are two-dimensional. Kelson, the once-brilliant academic gone to seed, has appeared in a hundred campus novels. Among the rest is O'Brian, an American journo who will

do anything for a good story. He verges on the crudest satire and was done far better by Graham Greene and Eric Ambler, though his use of satellite technology is both fascinating and essential to the plot. And Zinaida, the female interest, is a beautiful prostitute struggling to become a lawyer, but burdened with the memory of a father who both loved and brutalised her... Well!

It's an odd thing. While these main characters lack substance, many of the minor ones – particularly the Russians and above all Zinaida's father, Rapava – have a stronger reality, born of Harris's awareness of the history that made them. And the fulcrum on which the whole plot turns – and which I am trying very hard not to give away – is certainly blood-curdling, shiver-making, as befits a thriller. But it remains too sensational and downright unbelievable to be taken seriously.

In his take on Russia, Harris shows both prescience and enviable cunning. The book takes place in October against a background of economic collapse and civil disturbance,

but which October? Cleverly, he doesn't say, and it looks right now as if the die are rolling for him. His message is that the Russian people have a past which the West, by insisting on a swift and unconsidered transition to a free-market economy, has ignored, thereby bringing about a situation in which a return to Stalinist communism seems increasingly attractive.

But this, for all Harris's prescience, is hardly a blinding revelation: unless you happen to be a dogmatic free-marketeer, one of those who think history is over, or a policy adviser in the White House. What is good about *Archangel* is very, very good: and what strives to make it better than that only serves to make it longer than it need be by a hundred pages.

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Toffs against toughs

D J Taylor applauds a grand tour of the language, but finds that it loses its way on the home stretch

The original *Oxford Book of English Prose*, he might say, was a warily edited by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, appeared in 1925. Its trick was to solve the problem of the modern movement in literature by pretending that it did not exist. Restricting its orbit to "writers who had already solidified their work by 1914", Quiller-Couch's anthology managed to find space for prelapsarian golden boys such as Rupert Brooke and Compton Mackenzie while ignoring Lawrence, Woolf and Joyce. That said, only the most confident of talent-spotters should amuse themselves with the discovery that John Gross's recension, while including nine pieces of Joyceana and 11 pages of Lawrence and Woolf, is devoid of anything by the authors of "At Grantchester" and *Sinister Street*.

The *New Oxford Book of English Prose* is an anthology on the grand scale. Who can tell what tracts of John Gross's professional life its compilation took up, and what agonies of judgement afflicted its compiler? The effect of looking at it for any length of time is quite bewildering, like watching one of those "Great moments in sport" videos. As in-ch-perfect putt succeeds dazzling header and flawless boundary gives way to jinking touch-down, the reader is first impressed and then merely stupefied by the successive plateaux of excellence on view. Gaskell, Elizabeth; Chali, Wagn; Gibbon, Edward... "Bloody golden eggs again," as the narrator of *Flaubert's Parrot* observed, "haven't we had enough omelettes this year?"

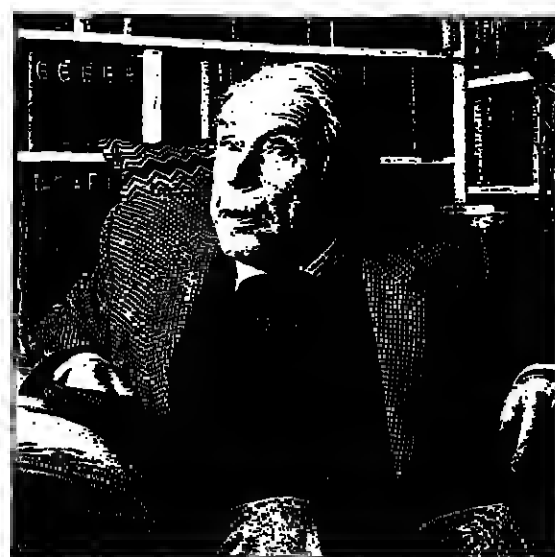
What is the point of these things? Who buys them? What are they trying to do? Fit the quintessence of English, or a substantial part thereof, into a single rucksack-sized volume? Market literature on the taster principle, in the hope that the reader, having worked his way through the 500-word sample



The New Oxford Book of English Prose edited by John Gross
Oxford University Press, £25, 1104pp

of Anthony Powell's *Afternoon Men*, will go out and buy the paperback? In a characteristically tough-minded introduction, John Gross sets out his objectives: to produce something "representative", to "illustrate the resources and achievements of English prose as an artistic medium" and to include items for their intrinsic value rather than historical usefulness. Totting up the strike-rate, one can hardly fail to award him three hits out of three, while at the same time wondering if some of the targets were worth aiming at in the first place.

To be sure, this bountiful trawl through the novels, stories, diaries, letters, essays and miscellaneous journalism of five centuries (the trail begins with Thomas Malory and ends with Kazuo Ishiguro) is "representative" in the sense that the kind of people one expects to find in compendia of this sort are there, together with the pieces one associates with them. Thus a glance at *Thackeray* turns up "Going to see a Man Hanged", Orwell's extracts include "A Hanging" (capital punishment always goes down well in anthologies, for some reason), while one of George Gissing's entries homes in on the much-recapitulated misery of the Victorian literary man



Clockwise from top left: Kazuo Ishiguro, Anthony Powell, Virginia Woolf and Martin Amis

Alfred Yule. To do Gross justice, quite as many of the selections are less well-known: a piece of Shaw's consistently entertaining music criticism, a fragment of John Meade Palmer's *The Nebuly Coat*, the Victorian critic George Saintsbury on Robert Southey.

To eclecticism and wide range can be added some weird omissions. This is most marked among the Americans (where, to name only the most obvious absentees, are Upton Sinclair, James T Farrell, Nelson Algren, Peter Taylor, Hubert Selby Jr and Fred Exley, each of whom it can fairly be said that they left American English in a slightly different state from the condition in which they picked it up) but it also applies to the 19th and 20th-century English. Among the former, no sign of *Pierre-Egan's* rollicking *Life in London* (1823), which influenced practically every male writer of the next 40 years. Douglas Jerrold, R H Hutton, G H Lewes (his theatre criticism in particular) or half a dozen other stylists whose misfortune it was not to have left a single defining book for posterity to pillage.

The early 20th century is better covered, though I missed A C Benson, whose diaries Gross ought to know,

and M R James. Meanwhile, the whole tradition of proletarian writing (Robert Tressell, Walter Greenwood, James Harley, Jack Common) escapes him completely.

Gross talks about it being possible to come away from the book "with some general sense of the evolution of English prose". This may be true of the pre-1900 extracts, and the bridges between, say, the Augustans and the Romantics, but I don't think it is true of the 20th century. If it comes to that, how has English prose evolved in the past 100 years, after the breakdown of Latinate, Victorian style?

Essentially, 20th-century English prose has become a kind of dogfight between the mandarin school (Waugh, Conolly, Powell et al) and the demotic (Orwell's baton taken up by the Angries). This battle has never been completely resolved, and some of its confusions are evident in the work of many a contemporary novelist. Martin Amis, for example, combines street-sharpness with a resolute, residual classicism. Little of this can be deduced from much of Gross's post-1945 offerings, which reduce themselves to fragments by the likes of Bradbury, Lodge and Co, or an unremarkable excerpt from Olive James's memoirs.

If there's a complaint to be made about the English prose of the last quarter century as represented here, it's that there are too few polemical journalists: no sign of Shiva Naipaul, for instance, or E P Thompson. Vigorous English prose still gets written on this side of the Atlantic, of course: the old superiority-of-the-US-novel line seems barely tenable these days. But, somehow, little of it seems to surface in the pages of "literary" novels. The best writing of the late 1970s was far more likely to be found in the *Spectator* and *New Statesman* than in Margaret Drabble's sapless novels.

None of the foregoing is intended as a criticism of John Gross, whose *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters* (1969) is one of the classic exercises in literary historiography; merely a restatement of some of the difficulties involved in producing a book of this kind. As you might expect, *The New Oxford Book of English Prose* contains some marvellous stuff, but it omits some too, and, as ever, one wishes that a few more risks had been taken. To borrow a form first coined by Francis King in a review of a Kingsley Amis novel: not many people could have produced a better anthology than this, but John Gross is one of them.

INSPIRATIONS NOVELIST AND DRAMATIST JOHN MORTIMER



The artwork "The Flagellation" by Piero della Francesca in the Ducal Palace in Urbino. It is rather like a novel in that there are two stories: something ghastly is going on in the background, the flagellation, and in the foreground are two men discussing something - but you don't know what.

The music I didn't come to music until very late in life. The greatest theatrical composer is Puccini because his music may be corny but it's wonderful. Turandot's music and, in particular, Little Lulu's lovesong, has all the excitement of the theatre - it's almost too exciting for me to think about.

The place Where I live, in the house where I was a child, on the edge of the Chiltern Hills. It is important because in a way nothing has changed, and in a way

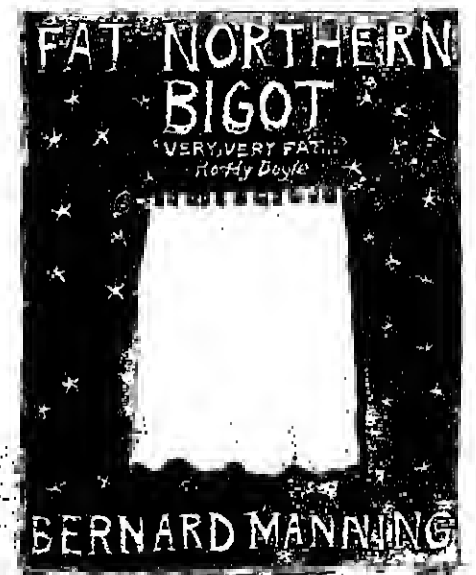
everything has changed. When I was a child all the cottages were inhabited by farm labourers and now they are all inhabited by merchant bankers.

The film Preston Sturges is the greatest film director. He made wonderful comedies in the early Forties. In *Sullivan's Travels*, a film director goes to live with the underclasses in order to write a film about them. Then he is mistaken for a murderer. It has a great social conscience: comedy about important things.

The play *The Cherry Orchard* by Chekhov. The new Conservative working class rising against the rather hopeless, charming, old middle class that I was brought up to be a part of; yet they all understand each other's point.

John Mortimer's new novel is *The Sound of Trumpets* (Viking)

ERRATA by FELIX BENNETT



The latest in the line of novels written by trendy comedians.

One-2-one disconnections in the new mobile zone

As a teenager, Deborah Levy disdained the uncool young Amis. Now he's got the information, she warms to a sadder, sexier writer

WHEN *The Information* got shafted by most critics, I started quite to like Martin Amis. The novel's central figure, a failed, middle-aged writer whose tears at night are information he does not know how to process, seemed to whip up a storm in an already hysterical atmosphere of male uncertainty. Suddenly the author's own rather sycophantic constituency spent a lot of time producing column inches about his mid-life crisis, his marriage, his book advance and, most of all, his teeth. This obsession with the molars of the nation's most literary Bloke seemed to me to be a weirdly misplaced attempt literally to get inside the head of a man - a fumbling autopsy behind the hunk shed.

For my generation of comprehensive schoolgirls who actually liked reading, Amis was definitely uncool. We went out with boys who wore eye shadow, and Amis kind of represented the opposite atmos-

phere. The macho characters in his early novels, the men who hunted and hated women, were of no interest to us. Amis came across as old-fashioned, posh, and very, very straight - although we read the work of older writers, such as J G Ballard, with great excitement.

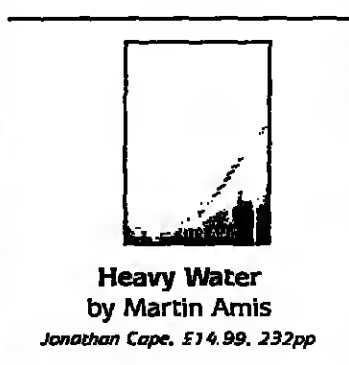
Yet despite the inauspicious launch of my relationship with Amis, I believe that serious readers and serious writers have a contract with each other. Our lives change and we re-arrange what matters to us: we live through the same historical events, and the same Pepsi ads. Writers and readers, nervously sharing this all too fluid world, circle each other to find out what the hell is going on. And it is the middle-aged Amis I find myself wanting to read.

His work has got sexier, sadder. There's more panic and mess and felt life - perhaps just more information. This is certainly true of *Heavy Water*: nine short stories,

most written in the 1990s, with the exception of the title story and "Denton's Death", from the 1970s. The form suits Amis. He knows that structure can make or break a story and he doesn't muck about. He creates a world in half a page, a character in two lines of dialogue.

The most substantial story, "State of England", rolls in at 40 gripping pages. Its subtitled chapters expediently map a culture of speed, greed and trash: Mobile Phones, Burger King, Motor Show, Rhythmic Slang, Mal, a small-time thief and his estranged wife Sheila, meet on the running track at their son's school sports day. Mal wears a linen suit but spoils the effect because his face has been cut up in a recent encounter with vicious opera-goers. Sheila is none too pleased with her husband because he has run off with an Asian babe.

Like Don DeLillo and Richard Ford, Amis writes movingly about (absent) fathers making amends to



Heavy Water by Martin Amis
Jonathan Cape, £14.99, 232pp

their sons: the Saturday lunchtime in McDonalds where they sit "like lovers over their last supper". This is an England of broken homes, changing identities, of men trying to find a language to talk to women: a one-2-one culture of disembodied conversations into mobile phones.

At one point, Mal instructs his wife to hide behind a bush two me-

tres away while he calls her on his mobile: "Sheila? Mal. Right... Since I left you and little Jet... It's like I got gangrene or something..." Sheila watches her husband, "both his arms round his head like a mouth organist," because he is talking into his phone and crying into his sleeve. Mal wants to escape from words into silence and, of course, Amis won't let him.

"Let Me Count the Times" is one of three satirical stories in which whole worlds are inverted - although I think Amis is a better satirist than satirist. Vernon is a married man who starts an affair - with himself - and enjoys the thrill of not being caught. He tosses himself off on business trips. In the office, in the bathroom and, sad to say, in the car, he counts the times. The reader gets the feeling that Vernon does not so much want to relieve himself as to be relieved of himself.

"Career Moves" echoes the

theme of *The Information*: the gap between the agonising success of one writer and the failure of another. Poets become big players and are flown first-class to Los Angeles while screenplay writers submit their manuscripts to small magazines. A sonnet titled "Composed at Castle" opens in 437 theatres and takes \$17 million in its first weekend: meanwhile, a famous screenplay writer dies impoverished in a hotel. This is genuinely hilarious.

A would-be writer also features in "The Coincidence of the Arts", which together with "State of England", is the heavy hitter in this anthology. This time it is America, class and race, that Amis does not so much scrutinise but try with, through the bleary eyes of an English bohemian baronet living in Manhattan. The "deeply white" Sir Rodney Peel finds his life has become entangled with the black super of his apartment, Pharsin, who has written a

novel he wants the baronet to read. Rodney Peel can't be bothered to read a novel about "the agony of the African-American male". He would rather watch synchronised swimming on TV. Pharsin's wife, however, has her revenge on the louché baronet. She understands that Peel is part of a dying class - dead white meat - and that it's tragic her husband should care about his opinion.

Saul Bellow once said of Hemingway that "for his generation his language created a life style". Yet there is nothing about the lifestyles in *Heavy Water* that anyone would want. In a sense, this is Amis's achievement. He has written that comedy is the last genre that means anything - probably because comedy allows the writer's vocabulary and strategies of assault to become more elastic. *Heavy Water* shows that comedy is the most appropriately cruel genre for a world in which people want more than they have.

How to thrill a thirtysomething

THIS WEEK'S most dramatic news for British fiction came, of course, when the government of Iran at last promised in public not to prosecute the fatwa against the winner of the Booker Prize in 1981 and the Booker of Bookers in 1993. Salman Rushdie would have won with *Shame* in 1983 as well, according to the new Booker 30 celebration volume (free in many bookshops), if Fay Weldon's very final change of mind as chairman of the judges had reached the prize administrator Martyn Goff in time. As she dithered once again, he made the fateful call that proclaimed the victory of J M Coetzee with *Life & Times of Michael K*.

On such slender threads do the fortunes of novels, if not lives, hang. And perhaps the Bosnian imbroglio has taught Douglas Hurd, chair for the 1998 award, the virtue of decisiveness. At any rate, he presides over a shortlist that turned out a tad less predictable than some of the sort of tales that confidently said neither Julian Barnes nor Ian McEwan stood an earthly this time. Enter - or rather exit - that same Martyn Goff. The Booker's eminence grise vanished for a while after laying his typically mixed-up trail of prime tip-offs and utter red herrings, planting (as one judge said to me) his

A WEEK IN BOOKS



BOYD TONKIN
The Booker Prize's eminence grise could spin for England

"seeds of information and misinformation". The priceless Goff could spin for

England. More, he could give lessons in the art to Peter Mandelson. In fact, he probably already has.

With Beryl Bainbridge, Patrick McCabe, veteran Martin Booth and newcomer Magnus Mills joining Barnes and McEwan, the field looks more varied and intriguing than those hoodwinked soothsayers had feared. Best of all, the Booker spinners had a fine conceit on Thursday afternoon when the panel's supposedly secret long list into the grateful laptops (and PCs) of waiting journalists.

The 22 titles on this roster embrace both the usual suspects (William Boyd,

Nadine Gordimer, William Trevor, Alan Hollinghurst, Helen Dunmore) and some enticingly left-field selections, from D J Taylor's *Trespass to Cereus Blooms at Night* by the Dublin-born Trinidadian, Shani Mootoo; from Giles Foden's *The Last King of Scotland* to *Fabrizio's Scarf* - David Caute's provoking, self-published satire on the whole Rushdie rumour. Now that we inadvertently know its content, maybe bookshops should start to sell this Double XI as well. In future years, why not simply publish the long list a month before the final half-dozen emerge? Because, I suspect, it would spoil Martyn Goff's fun.

All the leaks and gaffes and patfalls help to stop the Booker getting boring: a fate that often steals up on 30-year-olds when they begin to pride themselves on their maturity. Heaven forbid. Po-faced dignity in literature belongs in the grave or the Académie Française (which amounts to very much the same thing). The English novel and its cousins overseas descend from the mischievous genre-bending rackets of Dele and his chums - a legacy that Salman Rushdie, among others, upholds with glee. Perhaps he can now do so in peace. Meanwhile, Magnus Mills at 10-1 looks like the punt of choice to me.

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The Independent Saturday Magazine

SPOKEN WORD
CHRISTINA HARDYMENT

An Instance of the Fingerpost
by Iain Pears
Random House,
c 6hrs, £11.99

IAIN PEARS'S *An Instance of the Fingerpost* is a detective novel set in Oxford in the 1660s, just after the monarchy was restored. It had the bad luck to be published here in the week of Diana's death - elsewhere in the world it sold 100,000s of copies. Impeccably researched and constructed along the lines of Durrell's *Alexandrian Quartet*, with four different viewpoints offering four different versions of both events and characters, this is a richly textured story which knocks spots off Umberto Eco's over-rated *Name of the Rose*. Reader Paul Michael gets into the skin of each of the four chroniclers, and indeed the angelic and much-abused Sarah, with chameleonic versatility; punctuations of Renaissance music add frisson. This is one of the best audiobooks I have heard.

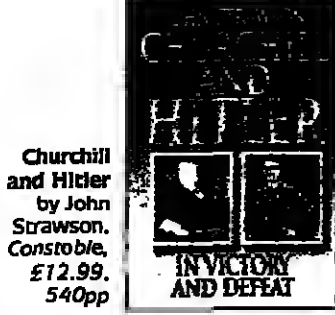


Fanny Hill
by John Cleland
Naxos,
c 4hrs, £11.99

JOHN CLELAND'S *Fanny Hill* is certainly no angel, and cheerfully admits it. Her personal rake's progress is an oddly charmed one - no kids, no pox, nothing that Fanny can't refuse, and a gloriously happy romantic ending. Read with utterly lascivious relish by Sarah Fielding, this irrepressibly huncy production makes stirring, occasionally very stirring, listening. But though the many wind-ups to climax are extremely effective, John Cleland's imagination is too obsessed by maiden-heads and staltioneseque length and diameter to offer any real joy to ladies. No wonder that Fanny ended up on the straight and narrow with her darling, moderately-sized Charles.

PAPERBACKS

BY EMMA HAGESTADT AND CHRISTOPHER HIRST



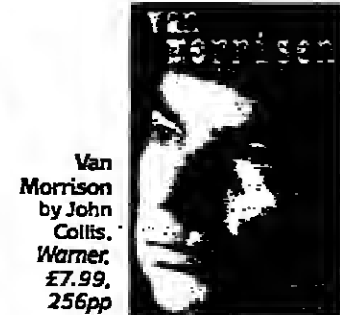
Churchill and Hitler
by John Strawson
Constable,
£12.99,
540pp

MORE THAN in most conflicts, the progress and outcome of World War II depended on the personalities of the opposing leaders. Strawson's account of their titanic struggle is compulsive reading. For him, the two men represent the honourable over and ignoble reverse of the human character. However, he notes some shared characteristics: "Both were accomplished amateur strategists, both were prodigious orators, neither could give up". Like Hitler, Churchill demanded victory "at all costs", but his finest hour came in 1940. As Strawson points out, Britain has always shown a singular "aptitude (for) avoiding defeat".



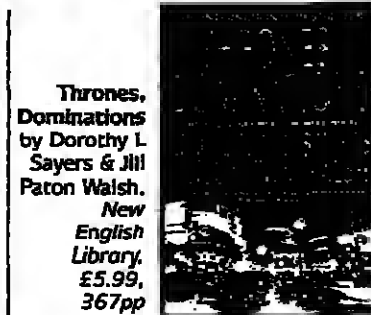
Blue River
by Ethan Canin
Bloomsbury,
£6.99,
206pp

A PRODUCT of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, Ethan Canin produces classic New Yorker style fiction. Set in a comfortable Californian suburb, *Blue River* tells the story of two brothers - one a wealthy ophthalmologist, the other a no-hope drifter - forced to iron out their differences during a sticky June weekend. A writer who revels in life's minutiae (see his near-perfect description of a bologna and sweet-pickle salad sandwich), Canin often loses sight of the larger picture in his enthusiasm for the kitchen fittings. First published in 1991, this tale of western-style redemptions is worth a second turn around.



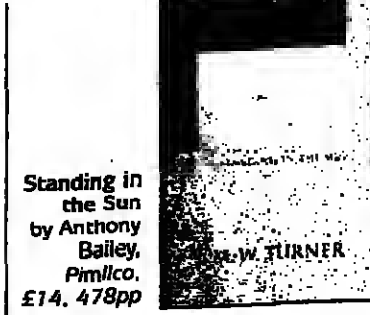
Van Morrison
by John Collis
Warner,
£7.99,
256pp

A DEFT portrait of the world's least likely-looking rock star, Collis expresses wonderment at Morrison's early output, though he overdoes things by quoting 22 lines of the *Prehude* in an attempt to elucidate *Moondance*, which the singer described as "getting stoned off nature". Covering the past decade, Collis begins to lose patience with his subject: "His paranoia is... simply offensive." Sometimes quirkily generous, but often irascible and graceless, Morrison remains an enigmatic figure. A surprisingly perceptive view comes from Cliff Richard, who suggests that Morrison is "filled with self-loathing".



Thrones, Dominations
by Dorothy L. Sayers & Jill Paton Walsh
New English Library,
£5.99,
367pp

DOROTHY L. SAYERS abandoned her 13th Lord Peter Wimsey novel in 1936. When a fragment was recently discovered in her agent's safe - whether a sentence, or a chapter isn't revealed - the Sayers estate cannily nominated fellow blue-stocking Jill Paton Walsh to finish the story. Sharing Sayers's descriptive powers, Paton Walsh conjures up Thirties Mayfair (and its whippet-eyed socialites) with dazzling flair. A fascinating portrait of the marriage of the now middle-aged Lord Peter and his "foreheady" wife, detective writer Harriet Vane, as they talk strangulation and subterfuge over the spotted dick.



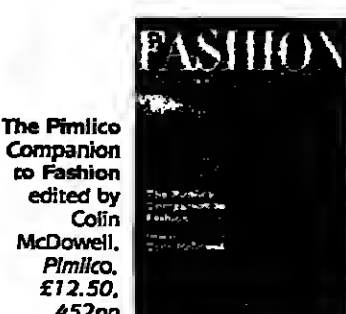
Standing in the Sun
by Anthony Bailey
Pimlico,
£14, 478pp

IN THIS superb biography of J M W Turner, Bailey explores the evolution of Britain's greatest artist from an accomplished technician admired for his grasp of naval detail into a visionary genius who declared: "Indistinctness is my forte." Turner so adored visual effects that he rose early to stare at the sunrise every morning. At least the work of this protean personality was appreciated in his own lifetime - he once turned down £100,000 for his hoarded oeuvre - though one hater was perplexed as to which way up a work should be hung. "You may hang it as you please," Turner snapped, "if you only pay for it."



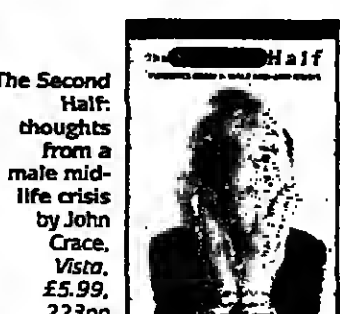
The Collected Stories
by John McGahern
Faber,
£6.99,
408pp

JOHN MCGAHERN, one of Dublin's top literary exports, can get away with many things - including 60-word long first sentences. Lyrical, melancholic and at one with the elements, he describes an Irish landscape that readers, especially American ones, hope for and expect. Included in the collection are classic stories of silent fathers and angry sons ("Gold Watch", "Wheels"), alcoholic husbands and disappointed wives - their quiet dramas played out in lonely farmhouses and cosy bars. Also reissued this month are McGahern's acclaimed novels *The Barracks* and *The Pornographer*.



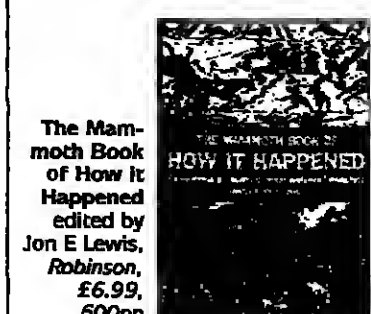
The Pimlico Companion to Fashion
edited by Colin McDowell
Pimlico,
£12.50,
452pp

THOUGH THE brittle opercus of Diana Vreeland ("I love Royalty. They're so clean.") are much in evidence, this excellent anthology is more about clothing than *haute couture*. Among many gems are Anthony Powell's Major Fosdick, who dons an evening dress before settling down with pipe and book. McDowell reveals James Bond's unexpected eye for fashion: "Her dress was of grey *soie sauvage* with a square-cut bodice." Fashion victims would do well to note Beau Brummel's wise words: "If John Bull turns to look after you, you are not well dressed but either too stiff, too tight or too fashionable."



The Second Half
thoughts from a male mid-life crisis
by John Grace
Vista,
£5.99,
223pp

THOUGH NOT to be confused with his more literary namesake, Booker Prize nominee John Grace, journalist John Grace can probably tell a better joke. His latest production is a perky investigation into the neuroses of the middle-aged male. Summoning up the usual list of suspects - fear of balding, erectile dysfunction, cancer and death - he speculates on the size of Nick Hornby's manhood (impressive), John Prescott's girly (ditto), and why certain middle-aged folk decide to retrain as counsellors and therapists (to feel one up on the other sados).



The Mammoth Book of How It Happened
edited by Jon E. Lewis
Robinson,
£6.99,
600pp

THIS BARGAIN basement version of John Carey's *Book of Reportage* stresses the darker side of human life, from Thucydides on plague in Athens (430BC) to ethnic cleansing in Bosnia (1992). There are some lighter moments - we learn that Attila the Hun was not much of a dinner companion ("neither by word nor gesture did he seem to share in the merriment") and Al Capone was a great patriot: "My rackets are run on strictly American lines." Oddly, the book's "great historical moments" include T E Lawrence's imagined account of Turkish beastliness and Adam Ant on the debut of the Sex Pistols.



Violin
by Anne Rice
Arrow,
£5.99,
367pp

THE STREETS of New Orleans are heavy with the scent of magnolia blossoms and car fumes, but inside Triana's Corinthian-style mansion, the air reeks of death. Perhaps her most striking novel so far (and she's written 22, including the phenomenally successful *Vampire Chronicles*), Anne Rice's latest dose of Southern gothic draws directly from her own life. Like her creator, Triana is one of four sisters, in her fifties and no stranger to loss, having witnessed the deaths of both her mother and her young daughter. To the rescue comes a long-haired violin player - part incubus, part revelation.

BEST-SELLERS

Maevie Binchy and Tony Adams again dominate the original fiction and non-fiction lists respectively. But there are two new entries in the non-fiction list: Richard Branson's unsold autobiography and *The Merlin Mystery* which was published world-wide in 12 languages on 7 September. Jonathan

Gunson and Marten Coombe have created a puzzle, the solution of which leads to a chance to win \$100,000 and a gold wand. The official website has already received over 60,000 hits, and 2000 messages from those trying to unravel the puzzle. No entries will be opened before 1 January 1999 and the

mystery will run until a correct solution is received or 31 December 2001. Suitable for all the family, *The Merlin Mystery* looks set to supplant charades over the Christmas holidays. Compiled by Bookwatch from sales over seven days ending 20 September. © Copyright Bookwatch Ltd, 1998

ORIGINAL FICTION

TITLE	AUTHOR/PUBLISHER	WEEKLY SALES	PRICE
1 (1) Tara Road	Maevie Binchy (Orion)	8,906	£16.99
2 (7) Charlotte Gray	Sebastian Faulks (Hutchinson)	8,235	£16.99
3 (2) Filth	Irvine Welsh (Cape)	7,554	£9.99
4 (8) The Tesseract	Alex Garland (Viking)	6,909	£9.99
5 (3) Rainbow Six	Tom Clancy (M Joseph)	6,606	£16.99
6 (4) Field of Thirteen	Dick Francis (M Joseph)	6,527	£16.99
7 (5) Jemima J	Jane Green (Penguin)	4,995	£5.99
8 (-) Net Force	Tom Clancy (Headline)	4,417	£6.99
9 (6) Love Song	Charlotte Bingham (Bantam)	3,946	£5.99
10 (9) Bag of Bones	Stephen King (Hodder)	3,626	£16.99

ORIGINAL NON-FICTION

TITLE	AUTHOR/PUBLISHER	WEEKLY SALES	PRICE
1 (1) Addicted	Tony Adams & Ian Ridley (CollinsWillow)	6,872	£17.99
2 (6) East and West	Chris Patten (Macmillan)	6,200	£22.50
3 (2) The Little Book of Calm	Paul Wilson (Penguin)	5,999	£1.99
4 (4) Men are From Mars, Women are from Venus	John Gray (Thorsons)	5,048	£9.99
5 (-) Losing My Virginity	Lenny McLean (Blake)	4,193	£20
6 (3) The Gun'or	Richard Branson (Virgin)	3,571	£16.99
7 (7) The Little Book of Stress	Rohan Candappa (Ebury)	2,644	£1.99
8 (5) My 1998 World Cup Story	Glenn Hoddle & David Davies (Deutsch)	1,890	£17.99
9 (8) Under the Tuscan Sun	Frances Mayes (Bantam)	1,877	£5.99
10 (-) The Merlin Mystery	J Gunson & M Coombe (Voyager)	1,738	£12.99

SPORT

TITLE	AUTHOR/PUBLISHER	WEEKLY SALES	PRICE
1 Addicted	Tony Adams & Ian Ridley (CollinsWillow)	6,872	£16.99
2 The Gun'or	Lenny McLean (Blake)	3,571	£16.99
3 My Autobiography	Dickie Bird (Coronet)	2,461	£6.99
4 My 1998 World Cup Story	Glenn Hoddle & David Davies (Deutsch)	1,890	£17.99
5 Close to the Wind	Pete Goss (Headline)	930	£18.99
6 Into Thin Air	Jon Krakauer (Pan)	789	£6.99
7 Rothman's Football Yearbook	edited by Glenda Rollin (Headline)	680	£17.99
8 Fever Pitch	Nick Hornby (Indigo)	471	£5.99
9 Anything But...	Richie Benard (Hodder)	390	£16.99
10 How Long is the Course?	Roger Black (Deutsch)	387	£15.99

When the
fizz goes flatMichael Glover admires the wintry
vision of a veteran classicist

SOME POETS impress their personalities - and the temper of their times - upon their writings like muscle-strapped farriers at the forge; others are much more ghostly presences, scarcely discernible except by the consistency of their preoccupations. Charles Sisson, now in his 86th year, belongs to the latter gang. He was a late starter into print. Though he belongs to the generation that includes John Heath-Stubbs and George Barker, those two were well into their careers as disreputable, Soho-crawling men of letters before Sisson began to publish at the beginning of the 1960s. And what an inappropriate moment to choose for a man of such reserve and classical temper!

And so it has gone on. Sisson has always seemed a man out of key with his times; a poet, to continue quoting Ezra Pound, who has been striving to resuscitate the dead art of poetry in miserably inclement literary weather.

There is this whole business of personality, for example, and what it has meant to poets who have taken their cue from those jocular and fairly sentimental anecdotalists who came out of Liverpool at the time that Sisson himself was emerging. To these poets, the individual was a shooting star, something to be marvelled at.

To Sisson, the problems of personality, in poem after poem throughout his life, have usually been presented through sinewy abstract argument in the manner of the poets of the 17th century. What exactly is it that distinguishes us from the rest of nature? And what is the point of all this self-glorification if it all ends in death anyway? Are we not all, the puffed-up as much as the dead-beat, as insubstantial as breath?

This is woebegone, knell-tolling stuff in the extreme, but it is Sisson to the core, and Sisson as he has been from start



Collected Poems
by C H Sisson
Coronet Press, £12.95, 525pp

to finish. Poems, he would point out, are not records of many experiences. There is nothing new to be discovered about the subject matter of poetry in these unruly, abject times. Its subject matter is the subject matter of Horace. Human beings have remained the same throughout the ages: poor, contemptible creatures, groping after a little light. The excitement of modern life are largely illusory.

All this sounds somewhat gloomy and sermonisingly finger-wagging, and so it is if read at a stretch. But not always by any means. From time to time - such as in that lovely early poem, "The Un-red Deer" - there is scope for flights of fancy that seem to edge in the direction of the celebratory. Sisson has spent a great deal of his life since he took early retirement from the civil service translating the classics: Dante, Lucretius and others, and these tremendous labours of love have confirmed him in his view that poetry is not the fizz of the moment, but a collaborative endeavour in which the poets of all ages link hands one with another. And what will Sisson discuss with all these revered great ones by and by? Metrics. I'm sure. There would be no point in wasting breath on human nature.



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The first flourish of autumn

Asters, chrysanthemums and hebes choose this time of year to be their own personal springtime. By Ursula Buchan

A light melancholy affects me in the flower garden in late September. Nothing too depressing, just a growing, downbeat appreciation that the lives of so many flowers, which have served me well all summer - potentillas, anemones, mallows, phlox, salvias, clematis - are drawing to a gentle close. I watch their passing closely (and sometimes even hasten it), for I am in the throes of that short, furious period of activity in which gardeners engage, from now until the turning back of the clocks shortens the days so dramatically.

It is not all goodbyes, however. Buds are bursting, and petals unfurling on a number of perennial plants: these have not hung on bravely from midsummer, nor are they like so many trees and shrubs, about to take on rich autumn leaf tints, like a match which flares up brightly just before it goes out. Instead, goodness knows why they choose to flower now.

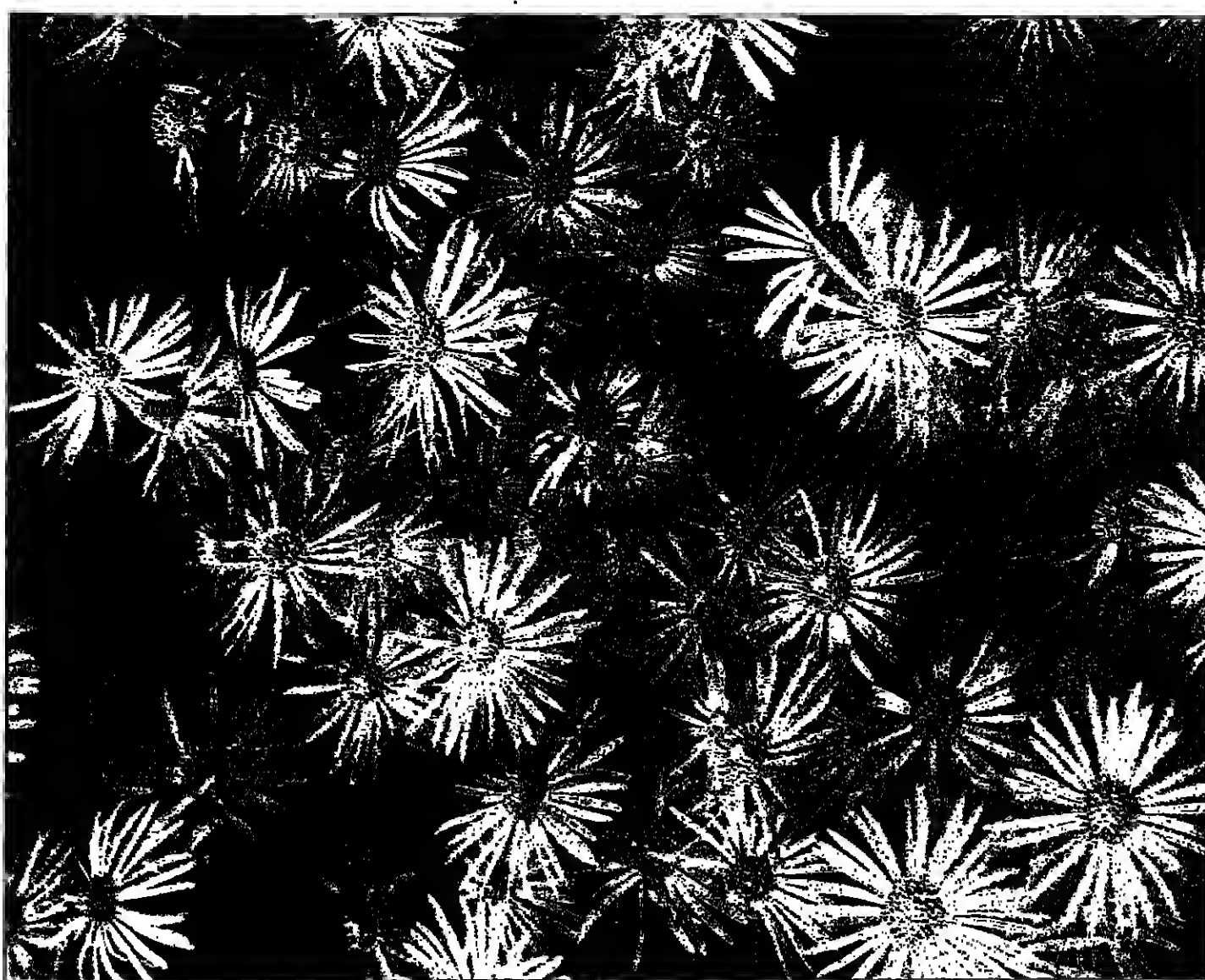
I feel about autumn-flowerers as I might (hypothetically, you understand) feel about a late-flowering love. I am grateful for what I have, but conscious that the first, fine, careless rapture of spring is gone, never quite to be recaptured. The affection I feel for plants which flower in October and November is not youthfully romantic, but sober and practical.

This is partly because the flowers themselves are solid and virtuous, even stolid: they are not mysteriously fascinating or mesmerising. They often look a bit battered, as if life has not been kind to them, but they are determined to make the best of things. I have learned over the years to cherish them, however, and I certainly would not be without them.

First in my affections is *Aster x frikartii* 'Mouch', a Michaelmas daisy with all the virtues, and none of the vices, of that uneven family. It categorically never gets mildew; its leaves are neat and rough-textured, its 90cm stems are wiry and mostly self-supporting, and the single, daisy flowers which open over many weeks, are a deep, clean, lavender-blue, with yellow centres.

They have fewer, and longer, petals than is the case with the *novae-angliae* asters, so look less bunched and cramped. The stems are also excellent for cutting. This plant divides easily, settles down quickly, and the flowers are reasonably weather-proof.

It is a hybrid of *A. amellus* (of which 'King George' is the best known cultivated variety) and *A. thomsonii*. There is an almost identical one called 'Wunder von



Weatherproof and determined - *Aster x frikartii* 'Mouch'

Garden Picture Library

Stifa' and nurseries are by no means always sure what they have, so you may well ask for one and find yourself with the other. Or ask for both and quit worrying about the names. Catalogues and books may tell you that they start to flower in July; in my garden, they don't begin until August but they are still at it well in to October.

Almost equally healthy is *asters* *ericoides*, whose several varieties are easily distinguishable from most other common asters because each flower (of which there are many) is tiny. These flowers are held in long sprays on bushy, rather buttoned-up plants; they don't have much 'give' to them, so I think they look best planted close together in groups, rather than as single plants. They usually grow to about 90cm in height. Well-known varieties are 'Blue Star' (80 cm), 'Bristlestone' (creamy yellow), 'Pink

THE AUTUMN BLOOM
Sedum 'Autumn Joy'; *Schizostylis coccinea* 'Major', 'S. Jennifer', 'Sunrise'; *Anemone japonica* cultivars; *Ceratostigma plumbagoides*; *Liriope muscari*; *Perovskia* 'Blue Spire'; *Nerine bowdennii*; *Hebe* 'Autumn Glory'

Cloud' and 'Golden Spray' (white with golden centres).

No one could ever accuse the hardy chrysanthemums of elegance, but those dumpy clumps, composed of so many sturdy stems, are invaluable in October and November. The border varieties can be found under a number of

headings, such as *rubellum* hybrids, Korean hybrids and hardy spray chrysanthemums. It does not matter, as long as they are genuinely hardy and do not need to be dug up and brought under glass in winter.

Between them, the hardy chrysanthemums boast a good range of singles or doubles, in colours which are white, pink, red, bronze, yellow, or copper. It is best to choose the ones you like in nurseries when they are flowering, for they will not all fit into the same colour scheme, and their habits are not identical. Don't buy them until the spring, however, for that is the best time to plant them.

I am particularly attached to my 'Cottage Apricot', which begins to flower on 60-90 cm stems in the third week in September, and goes on easily into November. It has warm apricot, single flowers and is an excellent complement to *Caryopteris*

x clandonensis, with its deep, pure blue flowers and silvery leaves, which I have planted in front of it. This chrysanthemum is not for a tiny garden; it has mild territorial ambitions, and is in any case so easy to divide that it ends up filling a number of spare spots.

I also love the so-called 'Old Cottage Pink', otherwise known as 'Emperor of China'. This may indeed be a very old Chinese variety; it has certainly been grown in this country for more than a hundred years. It needs staking, growing to 1.2m in height, but is worth it for the silver-pink flowers, with their slightly quilled petals in November; and leaves which turn a deep crimson in reaction to the first sharp frost. Others to look out for include 'Mary Stoker', 'Clara Curtis', 'Duchess of Edinburgh' and, amongst sprays, 'Bronze Elegance' and 'Mei-yo'. All flourish in a fertile soil and full sun.

WEEKEND WORK



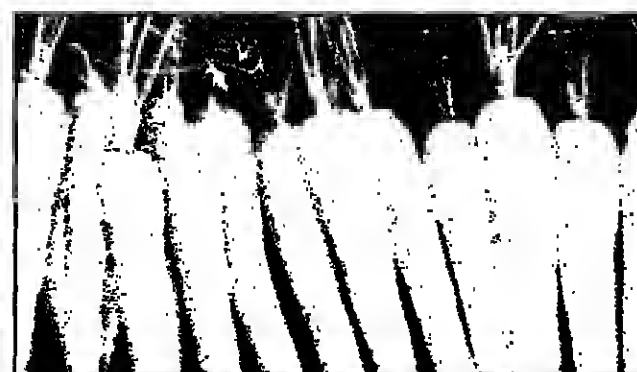
URSULA BUCHAN

REMOVE SUMMER bedding and plant spring-flowering bulbs, winter pansies, polyanthus, myosotis, wallflowers and sweet williams. If alpines have become unruly in a rockery, raised bed or in gravel, lift them carefully and divide, if possible, throwing away the oldest portions. Deadhead the lavish seeders.

Two fungal diseases, mildew (on a wide range of ornamental plants) and blackspot (on roses), are very evident at the moment. It is too late to spray effectively but not too late to pick off the affected leaves and burn them, or bag them up and dispose. If you let the leaves fall naturally, you will ensure a source of infection in the soil for next year. Dig up carrots and store,

provided they have not been tunnelled by the larvae of carrot root fly. If this has happened, they won't store well and need to be eaten quickly.

Use a "biological control" on vine weevil larvae, lurking in the compost of pots in the greenhouse.



CUTTINGS

NEWS FROM THE GARDENER'S WORLD

TIME WAS when private gardens were only open to the public, under the National Gardens Scheme, in spring and summer. In recent years, in response to popular demand, many now open at selected times in October as well, for late-flowering perennials and autumn colour. If this Indian summer continues, something may be salvaged from what has been a disappointing season for garden visiting.

You need to dust down your copy of this year's *Yellow Book*, or retrieve it from the glove compartment of the car, and refer to the dates of garden openings at the beginning of each county

entry. My recommendations include Chippingham Park in Cambridgeshire (18 October, 11am-5pm); The Old Rectory, Burghfield in Berkshire (28 October, 1-4pm); Cowley Manor, near Cheltenham (4 October, 2-6pm) and Bourton House Garden, Bourton-on-the-Hill in Gloucestershire (29 October, 12-5pm); Bulwick Rectory, Northamptonshire (4 October, 2-5pm); Coates Manor, Fittleworth, West Sussex (18 & 19 October, 11am-5pm); Brynau, Boduan, Gwynedd (4 October, 11am-6pm); and, for Scotland's Gardens Scheme, Meldeour House, by Blairgowrie (18 October, 2-5pm).

URSULA BUCHAN

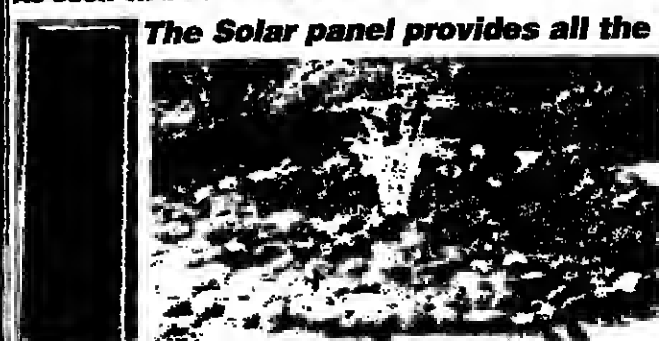
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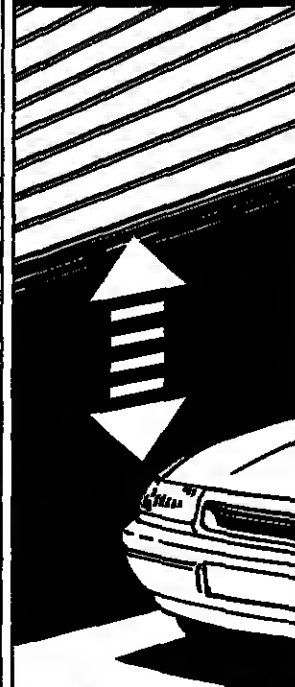
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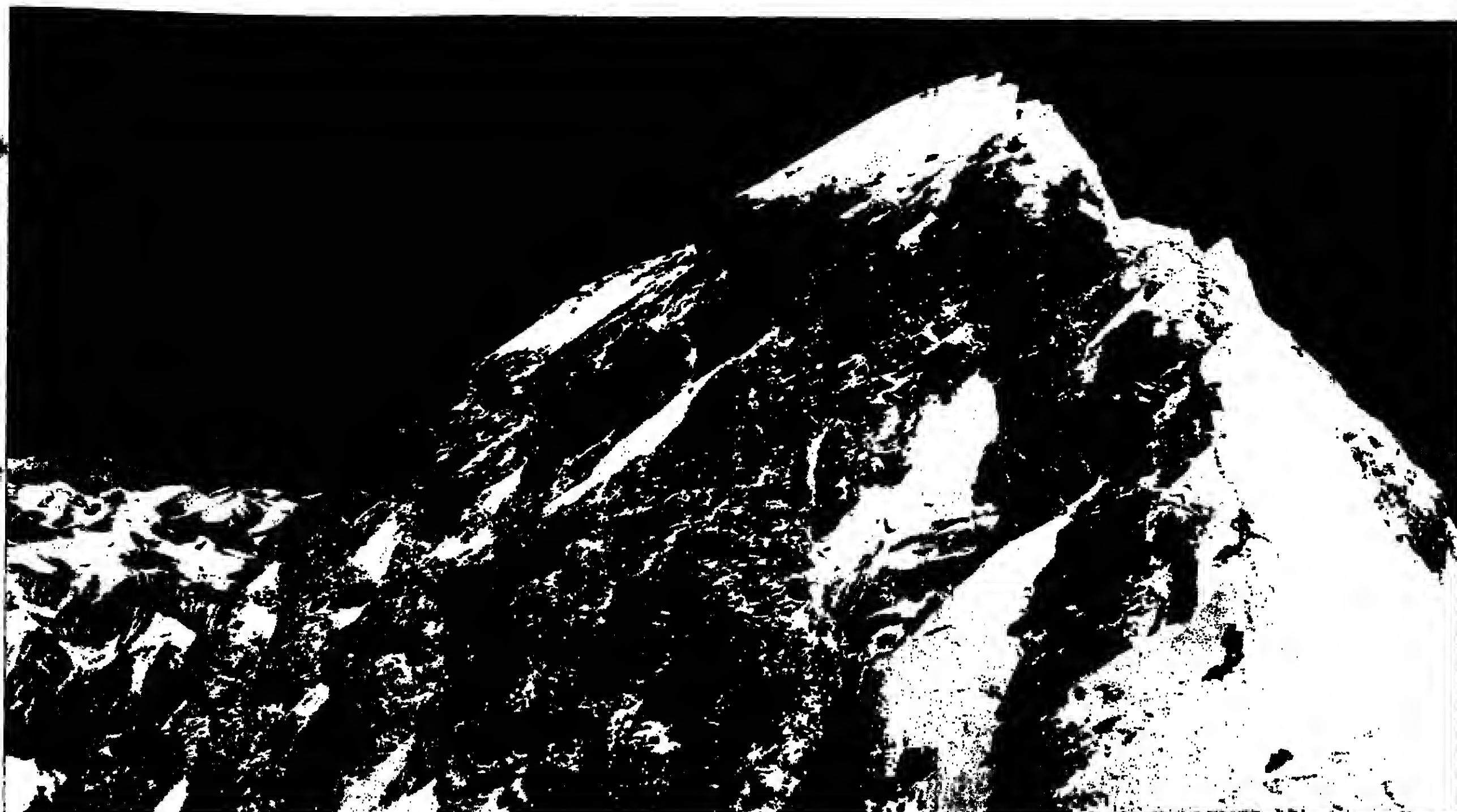
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Because it might be out there

Graham Hoyland has already conquered Everest. Now he wants to return to search for photographs that were lost back in 1924

The ultimate package holiday on offer at the end of the 20th century is the £25,000 trip up Mount Everest. You can choose from one of several commercial expedition companies. Given a high degree of physical fitness, some experience of high altitude mountaineering and the need to expose yourself to the one-in-six death rate risked by those climbing to the summit, you too can buy into one of these trips.

I've worked on two of these expeditions on Mount Everest, and the clients are fascinating people. Very often they are successful businessmen who are seeking still more success in another arena. They usually have more climbing experience than is credited to them by the media, but often one feels they are buying a cocktail-party trophy. It might seem that Everest is trodden to death by all these people, but there is a mystery up there in the snows of the jetstream which I would like to solve, and it involves a small camera.

Everybody knows that the first men to climb the world's highest mountain were Hillary and Tenzing, in 1953. But three decades before, in June 1924, George Leigh Mallory and Andrew Irvine disappeared into clouds near the summit of Mount Everest, never to be seen again.

They started a controversy that has run ever since. Did they reach the top nearly 30 years before Hillary and Tenzing?

Over the years a few clues have emerged from the heights. An ice axe was found on a high ledge in 1933, possibly marking the site of an accident. And an oxygen-frame was found in a place that suggests that one of the men was very near the top.

Then, in 1975, a Chinese high-altitude porter found the body of an "English dead", whose clothes crumbled in the thin, cold air when touched. This was at around 26,000 feet, and must have been either Mallory or Irvine. He told his story to a Japanese climber, using the few words they had in common, but was himself killed on the North Col the next day.

In his knapsack Mallory was carrying a Vest-Pocket Kodak camera lent to him by T.H. Somervell, who had returned to the North Col after his own very nearly successful attempt on the summit a few days previously. Mallory would be expected to take a picture of the highest point reached.

Kodak says that a printable image could in theory be obtained, should the camera ever be retrieved. This photograph could solve the mystery. Somervell, who was my great-uncle, told me the Mallory tale when I was 14. I became fascinated by the story of those early English expeditions through pre-communist Tibet, and vowed to climb Everest myself. My first attempt, in 1990, following the Mallory route. In the course of shooting a film for the BBC I reached 25,500 feet - 500 feet short of the terrace where I believe the body lies. I eventually climbed the mountain



Somewhere on Everest, top, is the answer to a 75-year-old conundrum. Did George Mallory, bottom left, above, ever reach the summit in 1924?
Robert Shauer/Hulton Getty

three years later, becoming the 15th Briton to stand on that extraordinary summit. Little larger than a dining-room table, it seemed a strange reason for so many deaths. Never believe anyone who tells you that climbing Everest is easy: I passed four corpses in the snow on the way up, dead from cold and exhaustion, and a Spanish climber I passed on the way down later slipped and was killed in a 3,000-foot fall.

Physically, mentally and spiritually it was the hardest thing I have ever had to do, and for a long time it left a strange rage and emptiness that I

do not want to speculate about. All I can tell you is what it felt like.

Leaving the tents of the highest camp at 2am we stumbled out into the darkness of a blizzard at 26,000 feet. We were sucking on oxygen masks, but my valve kept freezing up from saliva. The leader, Steve Bell, shouted "Lead off, Graham!" but I had to confess that I didn't know the way. Following his boots in a pool of head-torch light we plodded on in our own private nightmares. A couple of figures - Sherpa or Westerner, we couldn't see who - dropped back and gave up during the night. Looking left

down into Nepal I saw one tiny glimmer of light from the monastery at Thangboche down in the real world. My torch was just giving up when I noticed a faint glow on my right, away towards Tibet. It was the dawn: the most welcome sunrise of my life.

I sat down and tried to pull my oxygen mask off for repairs, but it was stuck to my beard. To get it off I had to pull off mask, beard and a large patch of skin. I then tried to have a drink, but to my dismay the boiling water I had poured into the insulated bottle in my rucksack had somehow frozen into a block of ice.

On we climbed. I was surprised at just how steep it became. Eventually we reached the South Summit and plodded around it to see the final obstacles - the Summit ridge, the infamous Hillary Step and then in the far distance the summit itself.

The step is a 30-foot rocky hiccup in the narrow summit ridge, first climbed, to his eternal credit, by Edmund Hillary. It is a very scary place, and I had been worrying about it since boyhood. Just as I reached the foot of it my oxygen valve blocked totally and I lost consciousness for a few moments. But I got the mask off again and managed to gasp my way up the ropes that were not hanging there when Hillary climbed his step. Three years later an acquaintance of mine was to die on that very spot, and hung from those ropes for months.

Once above the step I teetered along the narrow, icy summit ridge between Nepal and Tibet, between life and death. The sun was intensely bright and the sky was that inky black of very high altitudes. All around were the icy fins of the world's highest mountains.

Somewhere along that ridge I experienced one of those existential moments that is the reason why you risk your life. The intensity of the moment, the sharp savour of living wholly in the present - no past, no worries. The chop of the ice axe, the crunch of the crampons, the hiss of breath - this is the very stuff of life. Eventually I saw a couple of figures just above me, stepped up, and I was there.

I can't remember much: bright sunlight, a tearing wind, a long flag of ice particles flying downwind of us. A vast drop of two miles into Tibet. We could see across a hundred miles of tightly-packed peaks, and we could see the curvature of the earth. Contorted faces shouting soundlessly, lips blue from lack of oxygen. Doctors prove with blood samples that climbers are actually in the process of dying up there on the summit, but I should say that is where I started to live. Soon we had to turn back, and face the most dangerous part of our climb: the descent. Exhausted by the journey to the top, many climbers make a mistake and fall to their deaths, or sit down in the snow and fall into a long, fatal sleep.

I climbed from the south, Nepal-side of the mountain, so I was unable to search the terrace where it is believed Mallory lies, although from the summit I could see it from above. The grandson of Mallory, another George Mallory, has also climbed the mountain to settle family business, but ran out of time to search the area.

Most climbers at 26,000 feet on Everest have no time or interest in searching for remains - their sights are fixed on the top. So I am setting up an expedition to Everest's North Face specifically to try to find the camera, with people who have already climbed the mountain. Using a new form of radar-imaging device, we have the best chance yet of finding the clue to the 74-year-old Everest conundrum: was it climbed in 1924?

FACT FILE

OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER are fine months to trek and climb in Nepal; the summer monsoon is over, the air is clear and the views are wonderful.

If you want to try your hand at climbing a big peak but can't afford £25,000 for the attempt on Mount

Everest, a good alternative is one of the 18 so-called "trekking peaks". You could try Mera Peak, at 21,000 feet much bigger than any mountain in Europe. It has the added attraction of lying in a remote area of Nepal. Commercial expedition companies demand a good

level of fitness, and preferably experience of trekking at over 12,000 feet. These expeditions are usually led by qualified mountain guides who will show you how to tie the simple knots you need, and how to do a "self-arrest" with an ice-axe.

Several companies organise treks to Mera, including Classic Nepal (01733 590243), Exodus Expeditions (0181-675 5550), Himalayan Kingdoms Expeditions (0114-276 3322), and Peak International (01296 624223). For a three-week trip, you might pay in the region of £2,000-£2,500

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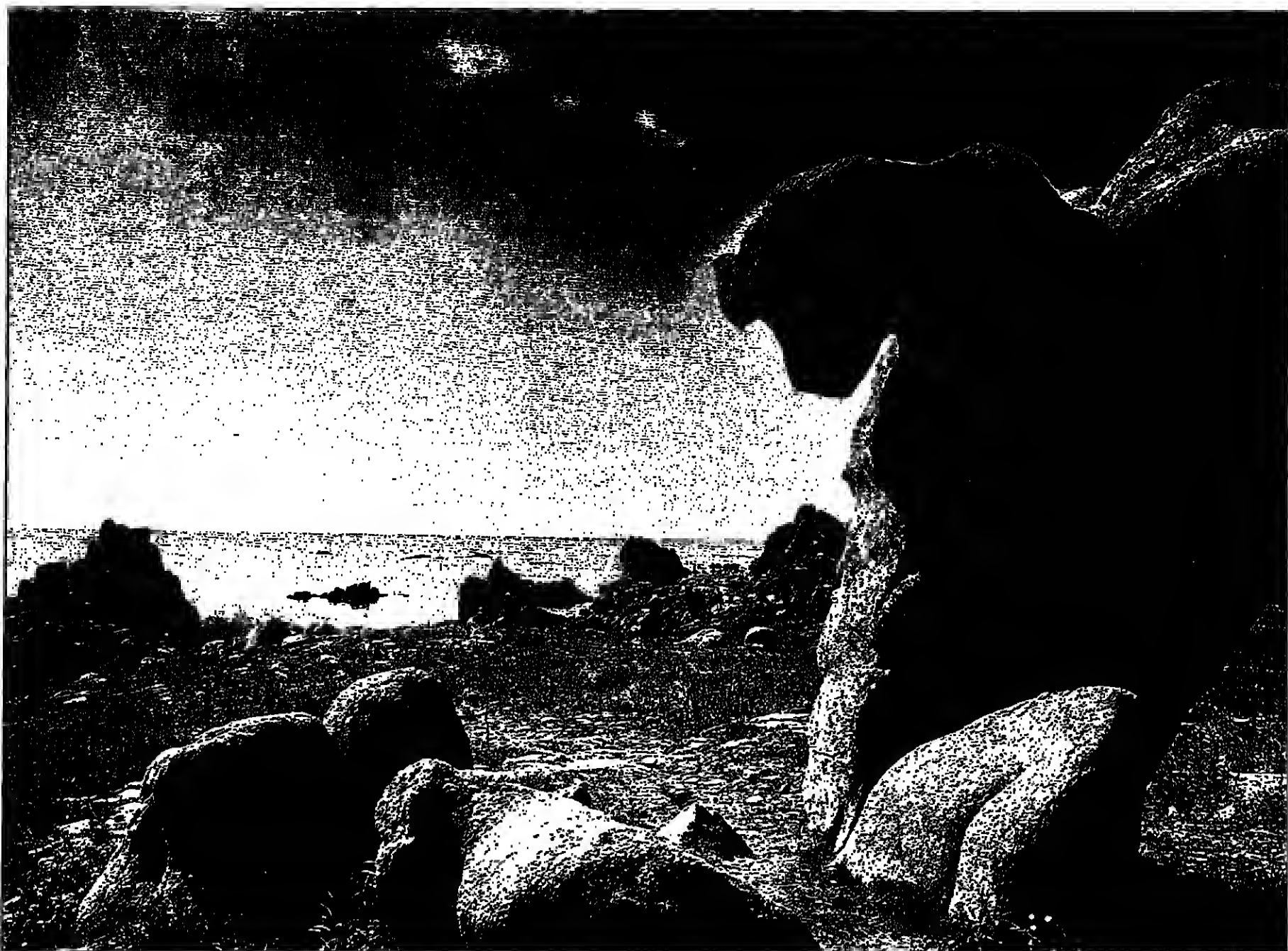
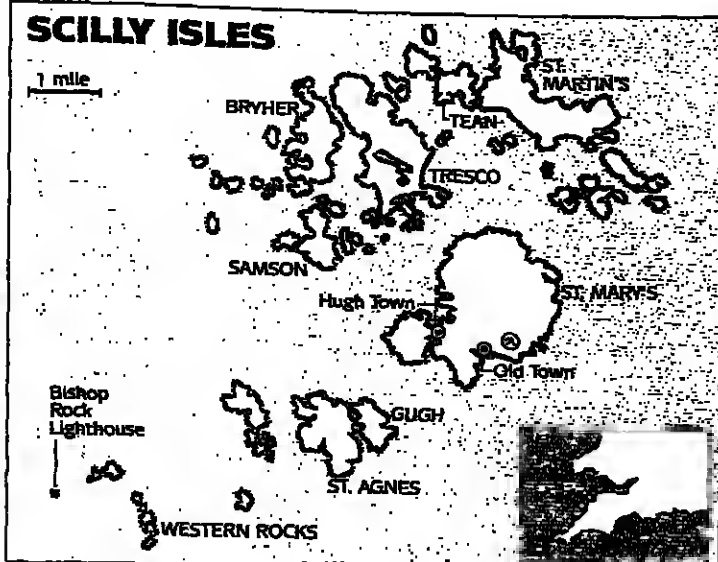
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As far as Britain's rail schedulers are concerned, winter starts tomorrow. But in one far-flung corner of the kingdom, summer should linger for a few weeks yet. Frank Partridge discovered that at the outer limits the weather doesn't conform to the British norm

The Scilly season, all year round



On the rocks: the extraordinary formations on St Agnes make it the gem of the Isles of Scilly

Adam Woolfitt

I HAD always imagined the Isles of Scilly to be a kind of weather-beaten extension of Cornwall, in the way that the Isle of Wight is different from Hampshire only in that you have to cross some water to get there. The weather, of course, would be extreme. A combustible mix of the wild North Atlantic sky and the Caribbean-warmed waters of the North Atlantic Drift. OK, so the Scilly daffodils come out before Christmas, but we took no chances and packed for all four seasons in one week.

In every other way, I assumed the islands would resemble their picturesque neighbour less than 30 miles to the north-east. Plunging valleys and cliffs, coves and coves at the end of precipitous paths; fast-flowing rivers and lonely moorland settlements with unpronounceable names; afternoon cream teas and evenings in ancient smugglers' inns. I was spectacularly wrong. The Scillies are quite unlike anywhere in Britain. We may have been lucky, but the clouds that shrouded most of the mainland all week simply passed the islands by: with no point of land higher than 150 feet there was nothing to attract them.

It is this lack of highs and lows, of both topography and temperature, that is the clue to the Scillies' unique character. Their granite is whiter and softer than Cornwall's. The winter winds have fashioned the edges into shapes as other-worldly as the most preposterous set in *Star Trek*. There is, too, a softness about the people - perhaps the result of living in a virtually car-free environment, where any significant journey has to be made by sea and is therefore hostage to the uncertainties of time and tide... and the personal requirements of whoever is skipping your boat.

Our first ferry trip, on which we were the only passengers, was held up not by an unexpected squall, but by the captain's greater need of a bacon sandwich and a cup of coffee. The shallow sea that, sometime

around 400 AD, rose up and converted a single mass of land into a circular cluster of 100 different islands (only five of them now inhabited), is rarely impassable, and every day The Road, as it is known, between St Mary's and Tresco, becomes the setting for a bewildering amount of nautical activity - both man-made and natural. One crossing between the islands was enlivened by a horde of low-flying cormorants stirring up the waves like a Spielberg D-Day scene as they homed in on an unseen shoal of fish.

Out on the wild, mysterious Western Rocks, approaching the Bishop Rock lighthouse - England's last toehold in the Atlantic, looking out at 3,000 miles of empty ocean - teeming colonies of shag, puffin and grey seal somehow find a piece of terra firma they can call home.

Putt-putt round a headland back to the sheltered bays of St Agnes and you encounter giant hydrangeas that make the mainland versions look like alpine. But enthralling about the flora and fauna of the Scillies is like a pyramid-teller telling you how wonderful Egypt is. We knew that already. What we never imagined was that such a small portion of earth and ocean could provide so many sensory delights that it would take months, not a mere week, to explore properly. The light, for instance, is what photographers and artists crave when they draw back the curtains in the morning - so intense and sharp that even the most hard-fisted point-and-clicker should return with a portfolio that would not disgrace a professional.

Despite a week of exhausting outdoor activity, we only scratched the surface of the guidebooks' "must sees". Slightly to our shame, we decided to leave the fabled gardens of Tresco until next time, content to view its African-bush skyline from our neighbouring island, imagining we were sleeping in the Serengeti and not 30 miles from Newquay.

St Mary's is every visitor's point of arrival and departure, containing

more than half the islands' resident population of 2,000. It is a proper town with a secondary school, a hospital, an airport, a golf course and the holiday home of a former Prime Minister. Barely a mile down a coastal track in the churchyard where Lord Wilson is buried, swaying palms and exotic plants look out on cliffs and sand that could have been transported from Jamaica. "Harold made sure he bagged the best spot", said a knowing visitor.

But the gem of the islands is St Agnes, a mile-wide blip slightly detached from the inner circle and remote even by Scilly standards. Here, the extraordinary rock formations take your breath away. St Agnes' sharply indented coastline offers a new view at every turning so a simple stroll is interrupted by a dozen diversions. A worse-for-wear church contains a quietly moving history of the island's long-retired lifeboat

the crews that were saved, the others claimed by the sea.

The narrow lanes, framed by the kind of hedgerows most of England dug up in the Fifties, teem with unfamiliar butterflies. Island news is chalked on a blackboard outside the village store: "Porpoise sighted in Beady Pool". You stumble across a miniature maze overlooking the last rocks of England. It is so tranquil here that after a day or two, even St Mary's seems like a metropolis.

On St Martin's, an art gallery is left open and unguarded, displaying pictures worth hundreds of pounds, with an honesty box at the door. And yet the familiar trappings of British life are all there if you need them. With a tail wind, you can have your copy of *The Independent* by 11am. One balmy afternoon on St Agnes, we idled away an hour outside the Turk's Head, drinking ale and sharing a pasty, waiting for the ferry to

take us back to St Martin's.

There was a sudden flurry of activity in the harbour below. Three men and a sniffer dog sped out to sea in their Customs launch in search of who knows what. Our boat eventually came in and we hopped from island to island, disgorging and picking up passengers. The September sun beat down.

As we neared home, passing the tiny island of Tean, we spotted a familiar navy-blue vessel moored off an absurdly white beach. Our intrepid Customs men, now in shorts and stripped to the waist, were conducting their inquiries in a state of, er, sun-drenched repose. The likelihood of a major seizure of contraband seemed slight: Tean has not been inhabited for centuries.

Want to cut the stress out of your life? How about a job with HM Customs on Britain's little-known corner of the Garden of Eden?

FACT FILE

FRANK PARTRIDGE paid £90 return for the 25-minute flight from Penzance to St Mary's with British International Helicopters (01736 363871). There are flights daily, except on Sundays, from Penzance to St Mary's and Tresco. A £65 fare is available for stays of up to four nights, and there is a £58 standby ticket for up to three days.

You can also fly to St Mary's on a fixed-wing aircraft with Isles of Scilly Skybus (bookable through the Isles of Scilly Travel Centre, 0345 105555), which uses St Just airstrip near Land's End. The adult return fare is

£85; a day-trip is £54 return. You can also fly in from Plymouth, Southampton Exeter, Newquay or Bristol.

Scillonian III, also run by the Isles of Scilly Travel Centre, sails the return Penzance-St Mary's journey daily, except Sunday, to 5 October; from then until 31 October there are sailings on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays before ceasing completely until a week before Easter.

The adult return fare is £62; a day trip costs £30 and allows over four hours on St Mary's. Tourist information, St Mary's: 01720 422536.

Is it a plane? And, if so, whose?

TO BORROW from President Clinton's celebrated piece of evidence, "it depends upon what the meaning of the word 'airline' is". The launch of the oneworld alliance this week hastens the demise of capital letters in aviation, a campaign begun by easyJet and continued by go. More importantly, it will become even trickier to tell which airline you are booked on. You can go around the world without ever travelling on the airline shown on your ticket. Buy a ticket on Continental Airlines from Heathrow to Los Angeles, British Airways onwards to Auckland, then Air New Zealand for the homeward hop via Asia - and you could

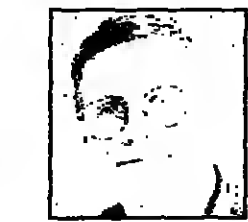
instead find yourself flying with Virgin Atlantic, Qantas and Singapore Airlines.

As has been discussed here, the practice of "code-sharing" flights has some trivial effects, like the absence of seat-back videos on Virgin Atlantic flights operated by Continental. Of much more concern is safety, since fatal accident records vary greatly from one airline to another.

A fortnight ago I explained how, at least according to the private website *airsafe.com*, British Airways has one of

the better safety records in the aviation business. But John Turner of London says that "the data reported there is incomplete as the BA statistics fail to mention two fatal events suffered by one of its predecessor airlines, British European Airways".

Indeed, BEA lost a Vanguard over Belgium in October 1971. The following June, a Trident crashed in Staines just after take-off from Heathrow. As Mr Turner writes: "The inclusion of these two events alters the statistics



SIMON CALDER

considerably and doubles the accident rate for BA, making it not significantly better than its European counterparts".

The launch of the airline alliance 'oneworld' hastens the demise of capital letters in aviation, a campaign begun by easyJet...

IT ALSO depends upon what the meaning of the word "aircraft" is. If a fear of flying keeps you grounded, then consider catching the Belgian airline, Sabena, from Brussels to Antwerp. A stall on board flight SN72 would be amoying rather than potentially fatal, since it is a bus. The craft cruises along the E19 at an altitude of about 10 feet and at a ground speed of around 60mph. A similar performance can be expected from Czech Airlines flight OK 4029, which trundles between Brno and Prague. Britain is not left behind: the country's latest airline, designated 2E, started "flying" in June. The new *Overseas Airline Guide* shows it as the most prolific route in the world, operating 70 times a day - between Heathrow airport and Paddington station. Flight 2E 0502 and all its sibling departures comprise the Heathrow Express rail link. But the crucial question: does the Warsaw Convention apply to these "flights"?

ONE REASON it could be relevant is because the Warsaw Convention governs how much compensation you are entitled to when your baggage goes missing.

Vera Grant of Cumbria says her airline showed little interest in the welfare of her luggage: when she flew to Norway, her bag remained behind in Newcastle. Normally it would be flown out on the next departure. Instead, it stayed put while Ms Grant set about trying to kit herself out for the cold.

When it came to compensation, the airline, she says, hid behind the paucity provisions of the Warsaw Convention: "an outdated regulatory mechanism which serves only to protect airlines from claims which would arise in other fields of commerce," she says.

With airlines so securely protected by the Warsaw Convention, she continues, "it is cheaper to pay the limited compensation required than to employ additional staff or more competent handling agents to do the job properly". The airline in question calls itself Brathens SAFE - rescuing some of those capital letters discarded by other airlines, and perhaps tempting fate. But, like most European carriers, it has an excellent safety record.

THE CUBAN national airline remains bottom of the list of airlines for whom safety statistics are available. But I am looking forward to flying on Cubana later this year, as you can guarantee an interesting experience. Just this week, Florian Barker of Coventry found herself on Tuesday's flight to Manchester, even though she had been booked on the previous day to Gatwick.

"Monday's flight from Havana was overbooked by 74 people, so they kept us in

a hotel overnight and flew us back the following day," she reports. "When we finally got to Manchester, the ground staff told us we'd have to continue by coach to Gatwick, even though we had been promised a connecting flight." After a passenger mutiny, they were put on a plane, and got home 26 hours late.

"That was better than the 54 poor souls who were overbooked on the way out," Ms Barker remarks. "They were put on a bus to Heathrow, flown to Madrid, connected to São Paulo in Brazil and eventually flown up to Havana."

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Star struck in Flanders

Coming to a Low Country near you: the Ghent Film Festival. Although the scenic city has had only a few bit parts, it possesses just the stuff for gripping drama. By Clare Thomson

Loose atmosphere and short on tourists, Ghent is a pocket-sized compendium of Low Countries history. But while it's home to the Benelux countries' best film festival, the historic town is still looking for that elusive big-screen break.

It's had a few hit parts - like *Mephisto* (a deranged Seventies drama in which Orson Welles lolls in a sick bed near the 12th-century Gravensteen castle) and its idyllic canals serve as extras in a *Fanny*

ardant vehicle - but film-makers have not flocked to cast the city in a starring role. Five years back, the star-crossed Flemish city had a brush with fame when Armando Acosta filmed an unorthodox *Romeo & Juliet* with John Hurt and hundreds of cats. But don't expect to be mobbed by fame-seeking felines as you cross the cobbled cathedral square; at best, you'll meet a pair of well-mannered police dogs who are in town for an episode of a Flemish TV series.

For all its medieval charms, Ghent has never sold itself as well as Bruges. And that's a shame because the city is everything Belgium supposedly isn't: progressive, creative and proud. Few towns can boast a post office resembling a Gothic town hall, or a train station styled like a Moorish castle. The city has an ombudswoman, a condom-seller who patrols the main square on Saturday night, and some of Europe's few human-powered taxis: sleek yellow tricycles pedalled by

breathless students through the pedestrianised centre. With more listed buildings than any other Belgian town, Ghent is the perfect place for pondering your movie masterpiece. In fact, if you visit the stern Saint Nicholas church, you'd be forgiven for thinking that someone else had got there first. Bombed in the Second World War and neglected for decades, the part-Romanesque interior has all the chaos and disorder of a film set, with randomly placed statues

and half-a-dozen disgruntled gargoyles mounted forlornly on a chipboard. As you'd expect from a place that was once one of Western Europe's wealthiest cities, the burghers' attempts to maintain their status in feudal Europe

are just the stuff for gripping period drama. Start from St Michael's Bridge with the city's most famous view: the spires of Saint Nicholas, Saint Bavo's Cathedral and the Belfry. Then track left down the waterfront, to the stone gabled guildhouses

on the Graslei, noting the golden ship figurine of the sailors' building. Whether it's merchants against nobles, everyone against the Hapsburgs, or Flemish proles against French-speaking aristocrats, the people of Ghent have always had a self-destructive appetite for a scrap. The Ghent-born Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, quashed tax revolts in the 1530s by storming the town, revoking its privileges and forcing guildsmen to walk round the city walls wearing nooses round their necks. It took the blocking of the city's trade route, the River Scheldt, to suppress the merchants, but Ghent's economy bounced back, thanks to a young Fleming who smuggled a spinning jenny out of England.

Away from the obvious romance of the Graslei, you'll find traces of the city's insolence in the local ale, named *stropke* (noose), and in the natives' refusal to acknowledge Charles V. Only one tiny statue of him exists, on the out-of-the-way Prinsenhof, and even the commemoration of his 500th birthday in 2000 will be marred by dons disgusted that anyone should celebrate the man.

Stepping into modern times, Ghent's industrial heritage and left-leaning political tradition could easily be tweaked into a heartstring-tugging tale of class struggle centred on Edward Van Anseele, Belgium's first socialist minister and a founder of the Vooruit (Progress) workers' movement.

Vooruit produced a newspaper and organised cultural events as well as lobbying for better working conditions. You can see the old newspaper office on Sint Pietersnieuwstraat near the splendid Art Nouveau-inspired theatre building, now a cutting-edge cultural centre. The equally magnificent Vooruit HQ stands on a statue of a rebellious 15th-century local hero, Van Artevelde.

When you've had your fill of period drama, bend your brain to a fiendish unsolved mystery, involving one of Christendom's greatest treasures. In 1934, a panel of Van Eyck's altarpiece, *Adoration of the Mystic Lamb*, was stolen from Saint Bavo's. The villain, whose identity is unknown, died before he could ransom the painting, and its location remains a puzzle that countless conspiracy theories have failed to crack.

Belgian film-makers have often been tempted by the retablo's colourful history, bits of which have been bought or stolen by Napoleon, Prussia's King Friedrich Wilhelm III and the Nazis: all they need is a suitably conclusive ending.

While combing the city's early canal canals and cobbled streets, you might find the perfect setting for a supernatural thriller. The forces of

good and evil are all around: in Bosch's *Journey to the Cross*, with Jesus surrounded by penitents and jabbering grotesques; in shop and restaurant names like *Lucifer*, *Avallon*, *De Hel*, *Fallen Angel*; and in the spindly devils, dancing angels and carvings of the senses adorning so many of the houses on Sint-Baafsplein or in the Patershol district, once a working class neighbourhood, now the culinary heart of the city.

It's hard to get spooked as you stroll the immaculate Korenmarkt, but you'll get a sense of the city's shadier side if you follow the waterways out of the centre, passing derelict warehouses, disused buildings and, towards the port, the lone-some Mercury bar.

Even the centre of town offers an unusually shocking experience. Squint your way up the dingy steps of the Belfry, spattered with the heads of statues, and take the glass lift that shoots through the dark, silent tower. Woeful about the giant barrel perched in the belfry as you squeeze on to the narrow parapet, then try not to fall as all hell breaks loose as a 54-bell automated carillon grinds into action without warning. Fans of *The Thirty-Nine Steps* will have no trouble imagining its hero clinging to the wings of the golden dragon that tops the spire - a symbol of the city's freedom.

Film festival guests from across the Atlantic insist on visiting the 'museum' town, Bruges, but why bother when you can enjoy history, and a much livelier present, in Ghent? Get there now - before Hollywood hits town.

The Ghent Film Festival (00 32 9 225 3641) begins on 6 October and continues to 17 October. Guests include Alain Resnais, Julia Ormond and Christopher Hampton.

The Flanders Festival (00 32 9 233 7788) ends on 29 October. **Tourism Flanders Brussels**, which promotes Ghent in the UK, is at 31 Pepper Street, London E14 9RW. Call 0171-453 2888 between 1 and 5pm, Monday-Friday, or the premium-rate brochure line on 0831 887799.

By rail, Eurostar (0345 303030) sells a return from London to Ghent (or anywhere else in Belgium) via Brussels for £89. Book a week in advance.

By sea, the closest link to Ghent is from Dover to Ostend on Hoverspeed (0990 593322).

By air, the main carrier to Belgium is Sabena (0181-780 1444). It flies to Brussels from Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, Bradford, Manchester and Newcastle. From Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted, Virgin Express (0800 891199) sells tickets starting at £39 one-way. Trains from Brussels airport to Ghent take around 50 minutes.



For all its medieval charms, Ghent has never sold itself as well as Bruges

K Gillham



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NEWS FROM THE TRAVEL WORLD

IN A YEAR when transatlantic air fares have hit absurdly low levels, travellers to Canada have not seen much benefit - until now. To try to stimulate business after its recent strike, Air Canada is offering cut-price "Welcome Back" fares of £259 from London to the eastern destinations of Montreal and Toronto, and £359 to Vancouver. These are for travel in November and early December.

But Philip Geochoio of flight specialist Quest Worldwide says British Airways and its partner Canadian Airlines are undercutting these fares by £19 to the east, £29 to the west, through discount agents. "Given that Canada is not a fiercely competitive market," he says, "these represent excellent value."

THE LATEST disease of concern in Africa is the Buruli ulcer, a flesh-eating disease described as "the leprosy bug for the third millennium". Worst hit are the Ivory Coast, Ghana and Benin, although the disease has also been reported in Asia, Latin America and Australia, where it is known as Daintree ulcer. It will strip away skin and even bone leaving terrible scars for those who survive. It has been found most commonly in marshy areas, but little is known about how it is caught. Travellers with unusual skin eruptions on returning home should seek medical advice, says Dr Larry Goodyer, writing in the new edition of *Wanderlust* magazine; subscriptions: 01753 620426.

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A constant window on the past

The German town of Konstanz mixes medieval austerity with a modern sensuality. By Malcolm Smith

Forget the stultifying gentrification implied by its Hotel du Lac image. Forget, too, the date afternoon perambulations along the lakeshore to imbibe the brisk air wafting down from the distant Alps. Instead, take in its voluptuous women. For Konstanz (long-known to the English as Constance), the far-south German city located cheek by jowl against the Swiss border, is an altogether more stimulating place than its stiff Germanic image might suggest.

Konstanz is sculpturally challenged by voluptuous women. Well, to be precise, by two such women. One of them is easily spotted at the city's lakeside harbour. The other is more difficult to find. She's on the opposite side of town to the harbour in the pedestrianised canal reservation of the busy Untere Laube road. Both of them get a mention – quite a lengthy one – in the town's tourist-trail leaflet, shoehorned in among write-ups on vast numbers of buildings which date from the Middle Ages or even earlier. For me, punch-drunk from reading about "rare Renaissance doors, windows from the Gothic period" and centuries-old buildings, Peter Lenk's irreverent sculptures came not only as a relief. They are an absolute delight.

His particularly sensual female figure, a slowly revolving, cream-coloured, stone-like statue 25 feet high is called "Imperia". She has decorated the entrance to Konstanz harbour since she was erected in 1993. A gorgeous figure, seductively exposing one very shapely leg (replete with ankle chain) and a large proportion of her sizeable breasts, what message she gives to unsuspecting tourists arriving here by boat across Lake Constance I cannot possibly imagine.

Over on the Untere Laube on the west side of town, the plethora of stone figures are further examples of Peter Lenk's scurrilous tradition. Centred around a set of fountains, the 30 characters represent a satirical look at modern society. Corpulent old men recline with their obese

legs immersed in fountain water, whiling away their time; infants with dummies turn car steering wheels; a Cupid with traditional bow and arrow plus less traditional flying goggles; even the Pope (perhaps not the present one) falling out of a coach with three buxom wenches, ready for a night on the town – while above him are the heavenly hosts (wearing gas masks for some reason still unclear to me).

Plus the voluptuous woman, this one with more make-up and smaller than harbour-front Imperia.

You have to admire the citizens of Konstanz for their artistic bravura. Not that one expects it here. The narrow, cobbled back streets and the clean and tidy Lutheran image of this most southern of German towns don't lead you to expect such challenges to convention. Perhaps it is also why on the wall of the 14th-century Lanzenhof building opposite, a crucifix faces the Lenk fountains. A suggestion of forgiveness perhaps?

The more conventional sights of the city are all in the tourist-trail leaflet. The trail begins at the railway station, as good a place as any. I suppose. Slavishly following it would take several hours. I managed about a third, picking out what seemed like the most interesting bits.

Probably the most impressive structure is the Konz or council

building by the harbour. Grey rendered and rather dull and barn-like externally, it was built as a grain store way back in 1388. Today, it is used as a meeting and conference centre. Inside, the huge solid oak pillars supporting the equally massive oak ceiling and roof timbers can't fail to impress. And, I was told, they are the originals.

The main conference room is the very place in which, for three long days in November 1417, the Catholic church's then 53 cardinals, all in their brilliant scarlet robes, sat in a huddle to fix the election of Pope Martin V, the only Pope ever elected on German soil.

From the Konz building, it's a shortish walk through the town's public gardens on the lakeshore, and along the banks of the Rhine flowing into Lake Constance, to the historic Niedenburg district of the city.

The oldest part of Konstanz, with part-timbered houses from the 14th and 15th centuries, is, according to the town trail "a maze of narrow medieval lanes, many of them still cobbled". I found it a tad disappointing. True, there are quite a lot of houses dating from the late Middle Ages, but much renovated and altered.

Niedenburg leads one to Konstanz's massive, pale-grey stone, Romanesque cathedral which, for the next few years at least, will be undergoing exterior renovation. If you have the time and the energy, climb the steps inside the 250ft spire. From the very top on a clear day, you might spot Bregenz in Austria, which is nearly 30 miles away.

If traipsing around historic buildings and streets isn't to your liking, try a boat trip on Lake Constance. Two thirds of its shore is in Germany, the rest in Austria or Switzerland. A regular ferry plies to the picturesque German village of Meersburg. It costs just DM2.40 (77p).

From there you can pick up ferries to other lakeside towns. On a warm day, with distant views of the snow-capped eastern Swiss and Austrian Alps touching the clouds, it's well worth a trip. And you get a close-up of imperious Imperia's well-endowed figure for free.

FACT FILE

Getting there: by air, the most convenient gateway is Zurich, across the border in Switzerland. British Airways (0345 222111) and Swissair (0171-434 7300) fly from Heathrow. BA also flies from Gatwick, Newcastle and Southampton. Starting prices are around £125 return. There are four direct trains a day from Zurich airport to Konstanz, taking 65 minutes. German National Tourist Office, 65 Curzon Street, London W1T 5NE (0891 600100)



A window on Konstanz in the 16th century: not much has changed today

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A trembling southern beauty

The Chilean capital of Santiago is a city of Andean vistas, exotic gardens and the occasional earthquake. By Hugh O'Shaughnessy

Santiago is a city for nature lovers and gardeners. And, with the lowest fares ever coming on stream for our autumn/spring, it's also for weekenders. Be the first on your patch to return home from the ultimate 20,000km weekend.

Nature can be bountiful to those who love Santiago. If you are lucky, you can catch one of those evenings when the setting sun shines in, and transforms 6,000m of Andes mountains to the east into a gigantic pink stone curtain that stretches from the northern to the southern horizon. The experience is never to be forgotten.

Meanwhile, in some of the main avenues of Santiago, the Chilean gardeners come to the fore. The central reservations are magnificent combinations of grey and green vegetation of exotic Southern Hemisphere plants. (The monkey-puzzle tree, for instance, is a local species.) There is hardly a square or broad street where you are not liable to be splashed by some loving gardener watering the plants in his care.

But I also mean by focusing on nature that the architecture in the capital of Chile isn't up to much. How could it be? Sitting in an earthquake zone, the city has over the centuries either seen its most delicate buildings shaken down, or has had to rejoice as best it could in the survival of buildings put up with great fat walls.

It was not until comparatively recently that architects made buildings sufficiently flexible to ride the earth when it galloped under your feet. Today, at the eastern end of the city in the financial quarter, a new generation of skyscrapers has been erected which should protect the bankers within when the ground rumbles again, as it surely will. But all public buildings have the exits well marked in case a little tremor turns into a full-blown *sismo* and you have to put down your *café cortado* or *coppuccino* and run.

One old colonial building remains, the Casa Colada, a nobleman's house a block away from the central square which is now the Museum of Santiago. It shows how for centuries since the Spaniards founded it in 1541, the place was a backwater, capital of a country which had none of the gold or silver that the Europeans had crossed the Atlantic to find. Like some little US settlement in the Mid-West, though centuries earlier, it was nearly wiped out by Indians understandably hostile to Europeans with their secret weapons, the horse and gunpowder.



Ride the earth - Santiago's World Trade Centre is one of a new generation of skyscrapers built to withstand tremors

Pablo Corral/Corbis

The city is positively stuffed with museums: decorative arts, sculpture - you name it they have it. One of the most intriguing displays is at the Museo Aeronautico, devoted to space exploration.

The presidential palace, the Moneda, was once the country's mint. Until the coming of military rule, the courtyards with their fountains

were open to the public and used as a convenient short cut from one part of town to the other. The building was destroyed by bombing on 11 September 1973 when General Pinochet seized power. It has been totally restored but subsequent governments haven't restored the public's right of way.

The Plaza de Armas is the centre of the oldest quarter, where citizens come together to have their shoes cleaned, play chess or shout

along how Jesus saved them. Under the arcade of the Plaza is Cher Henry, a traditional restaurant. It is unassuming with attentive waiters who will serve you with the finest seafood plucked from the South Pacific and wines from the vineyards which surround the city.

While you are downtown, go to the central market and see hake and salmon the size of small children, mountains of cockles, sea-urchins, crabs and lobsters, all going for a

song. Go, then, to the Viña Santa Carolina, Concha y Toro, Undurraga or Cousiño-Macul in the very outskirts of the city or in the Maipo Valley half an hour's drive beyond and see the wines maturing in their dark cellars.

If you have itchy feet while you're in the city you can always take a cheap collective taxi to Mendoza (about five hours away). This is the first big city on the Argentine side of the Andes, on one of the highest and most thrilling roads in the

world (at one point there are 20 successive hairpin bends). At the top, there is four-kilometre long tunnel which enables you to cross the mountains at an altitude low enough to allow you to breathe. If you're feeling poor, you can do the journey on a bus for less than a fiver.

British Airways flies four times a week from Gatwick to Santiago. The airline has just cut fares to the city substantially for travel in October,

November and the beginning of December. Through discount agents such as Journey Latin America (0181-747 3108), the airline is selling return tickets for £519 return. You could travel for a similar fare on Aerolineas Argentinas, but this requires that you make a change of plane in Madrid and Buenos Aires. The easiest way to travel long distances in Chile is on the national airline, LAN Chile, using an airpass; specialist agents can provide details

Don't argue with a 500lb turtle on heat

The mid-Atlantic Ascension Islands once boasted the world's worst golf greens, but Michael Brooke recommends it for holidays like no other

ASCENSION IS a paradox that is evident from the moment of touchdown at Wideawake Airfield. Adjacent to the runway is South Gannet Hill - a towering cone of red volcanic cinder topped by communications equipment of the 21st century.

On the one hand, here is a volcanic island, a pimple of the mid-Atlantic ridge that has emerged above the sea in the last million years. It is an island where subterranean forces have spewed a palette of rocks - black lava fields, cones of red scoria of immaculate symmetry, dusty trachyte as white as the cliffs of Dover. How, ask I as a non-geologist, can a single fissure into the bowels of the earth yield such variety? It is as if one toothpaste tube magically produces toothpaste, chocolate spread and tomato paste on separate days.

On the other hand, tracts of this geological wonderland are besmirched with satellite dishes and telecommunications golf balls belonging variously to the RAF, the US Air Force, Cable and Wireless, and the Combined Signals Organisation. The BBC World Service maintains huge antenna arrays for beaming the word to Africa and South America. It is the 1,000 employees of these organisations, mostly either St Helenians or British and American expatriates, who form Ascension's transient population. Overseeing this hotpotch is the British Administrator, a career diplomat who has the honour of driving a car with the quality personalised number-plate, AAI, and some 40 miles of paved road on which to flaunt



The green turtle: around 2,000 swim to Ascension to lay eggs Ron & Val Taylor

it. Although I suspect the present incumbent is delighted to exercise benign rule over all he surveys in the run-up to his retirement, he remains the diplomat and declined to comment. From the airfield, we drove in a police van to Georgetown,

the principal settlement. Named after George III since 1815, when a British garrison permanently occupied the island, the town still shows its military past. Two forts guard the pier. The main hardware supplier is housed in the former Great Victualling Store, an imposing building of volcanic blocks built in 1843.

We stayed in the Islander Hostel which principally serves as temporary lodging for those bound for St Helena by ship. Across the road, we ate in the

St Helenian mess, where the food was plentiful and reminiscent of school. Meanwhile, the Exiles Club, built during the reign of William IV as the naval barracks, provided beer or a glass of wine at 80p, boisterous half-price happy hours, and a grand view of the setting sun. Just to the north of Georgetown is Long Beach, a steeply shelving crescent of white sand. It is the nesting beach for the green turtles, some 2,000 of which come ashore to lay eggs each season, roughly from

January to April. Since its discovery in 1501, Ascension has been famous for its turtles which travel to breed on the island from feeding grounds off coastal Brazil, about 1,500 miles to the west.

In the old days, the unlucky ooes were captured. After visiting Ascension at the end of the 17th century, John Ovington wrote that, once turned upside down, "they then begin to lament their condition in many heavy sighs, and mournful groans, and shed abundance of water from their eyes in hopes, if possible, to secure their safety by their tears".

Georgetown's delightful little museum displays a turtle harness, used for dragging 500lb of obstreperous turtle from the beach to the turtle ponds, walled enclosures flushed by the tide. Here, sighting turtles awaited a passing ship and their fate. Because of the island's size - it is roughly circular and about 10 miles across - a hire car is vital for getting around. Beware the world's scruffiest sheep on the road. Beware, too, the land-crabs which are four inches across the back and dwell in the moister parts of the island. They wave their claws in helpless rage at approaching tyres.

A car also helps to reach the start of various walks. One day, we visited the sooty terns whose cry "wideawake" gives the airfield its name. Ascension's terns do not respect the seasons. Every nine-and-a-half months, they return in a clamorous mass, each pair to lay its single egg on the sunbaked ground. Pity the poor chick which enters this arid world.

To judge by the guano that still smears many rocks, like creamy icing that has run before setting, great throngs of seabirds once bred on the island, the only haven in a huge tract of Atlantic. Nowadays, the terns are the only seabirds to nest on the

main island. Roaming feral cats have seen away the throng. A paltry remnant nests on Boatwain Bird Island, a short distance from the main island. This stack, resembling an irregular wedge of white chocolate emerging from the blue ocean, is home to the entire world population of the Ascension frigate bird, as well as boobies, tropic birds and various other species.

For a holiday like no other, go to Ascension. The "greens" of

the golf course, once listed in *The Guinness Book of Records* as the worst in the world, are raked blackish-grey sand. Parts of the landscape resemble a pile of red bricks, and are correspondingly uncomfortable to traverse. Nevertheless, the red post van is still emblazoned "Royal Mail". And when I asked my travelling companion whether he would like to return, he said without hesitation: "Absolutely". My very thought.

Before you travel to Ascension, request permission from the administrator, Roger Huxley; his telephone number is 00 247 6311, fax 00 247 6152, and e-mail: administrator@atlantis.co.uk. The only "airline" operating to Ascension is the Royal Air Force, which stops there en route to the Falklands. It flies twice a week from Brize Norton, fare £243 one-way. Book your flight through the Foreign Office on 0171-270 2749.

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Limited release

DEEP RISING (15)

Director: Stephen Sommers
Starring: Treat Williams, Famke Janssen, Jason Flemyng, Anthony Heald
Ramshackle B-movie-style thriller about a cruise liner attacked by a mysterious and savage underwater monster.

Limited release

SECRET DEFENSE (PG)

Director: Jacques Rivette
Starring: Sandrine Bonnaire, Jerzy Radziewicz, Gregoire Colin (subtitles)
Sylvie (the transfixing Bonnaire) is a scientist whose brother sneaks into her laboratory to

steal her gun and reveal some devastating news - he knows who killed their father.

Limited release

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY (15)

Director: Peter & Bobby Farrelly
Starring: Cameron Diaz, Ben Stiller, Matt Dillon, Lee Evans, Chris Elliott
Stiller is heart-breaking as the nerdy Ted, who ruins his big Prom Night date with the local beauty, Mary (Cameron Diaz), when he has an ugly accident with his zipper. Flash forward 13 years, and Ted's life is in limbo because he can't get over his former near-date.

Nationwide

WOO (15)

Director: Daisy V.S. Mayer
Starring: Jade Pinkett Smith, Tommy Davidson, Duane Martin
What plot there is in this witless comedy revolves around the love life of a woman named Woo, and the efforts of various suitors to bed her. The film evidently couldn't care less about its characters.

Limited release

Ryan Gilbey

THE INDEPENDENT RECOMMENDS

Film Ryan Gilbey

THE British reggae musical *Babymother* (below) is vibrant and delightful, and you wouldn't expect to find those words associated with something set in Harlem. The film's heroine (Anjelica Lauren Smith) could be a reggae star - if only she can find a way to negotiate child-care and the interference of a calculating boyfriend. The picture buzzes with colour and vitality, often literally - it sometimes appears that the film stock has been splashed with Day-Glo paint. The movie's real star is the costume designer Annie Curtis Jones, while the robust, sexy songs can make you tingle.



On general release

In the wake of all the misdirected acclaim for *Saving Private Ryan*, remind yourself of when Steven Spielberg was a master to be reckoned with, and catch *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* tonight. Its magical combination of wide-eyed wonder and piercing intelligence is truly gripping. This is the later Special Edition, re-edited with extra footage.

National Film Theatre, London SE1 (0171-223 3222) 7.30pm

Theatre Dominic Cavendish

DOING AN Alan Ayckbourn play may hardly be seen as radical, but with *Time of My Life*, the Swansea-based physical theatre company Volcano have dared to be different. The text stays the same - a family get-together in a restaurant providing the springboard for the usual dissection of congenital middle-class misery. But the play's context of non-naturalistic, combative movement creates an altogether punchier kind of comedy.

Queens Hall, Narberth, Wales (01834 861212) 8pm
Liz Lochhead (right) has followed the success of *Perfect Days*, with the charming *Britannia Rules*, which traces the complex bonds between Second World War child evacuees from Clydebank who meet 10 years later.



Royal Lyceum, Edinburgh (0131-229 9697) 7.45pm

GENERAL RELEASE

ARMAGEDDON (12)

This deeply stupid film purports to be a love story, a meaty action adventure and a global disaster movie, but its mixture of styles will end up pleasing no-one.

BABYMOOTHER (15)

See *The Independent Recommends*, above.

CHARACTER (KARAKTER) (15)

Mike Van Diem's intelligent but uneven drama about betrayal won this year's Oscar for Best Foreign Language film. It certainly comes equipped with what the Academy adores but the picture is never as gripping as it should have been.

DR DOLITTLE (PG)

In this snappy new film version of *Dr Dolittle* Eddie Murphy shows that his talents are more pliable than they might have first appeared.

THE DOOM GENERATION (18)

Gregg Araki continues his investigation of apocalyptic modern America with this gory tongue-in-cheek road movie about a couple who hit the road with a psychotic friend.

EVE'S BAYOU (15)

Rites-of-passage drama set in Louisiana. Despite some intuitive observations, this feels for the most part like reheated *Fried Green Tomatoes*.

GODZILLA (PG)

The team which cooked up *Independence Day* and *StarGate* is generally very adept at constructing enjoyable adventures. In this case, their light touch has deserted them.

HE GOT GAME (18)

Jake Shuttlesworth (Denzel Washington) is in jail for the murder of his wife but could cut short his sentence if he can persuade his basketball star son to sign up with the Governor's alma mater. An impressive performance from Washington, but Lee's stylistic excesses are the film's undoing.

THE HORSE WHISPERER (PG)

Robert Redford's film of Nicholas Evans's novel is a case study in the narcissistic allure of cinema. Redford plays a farmer who specialises in equine psychology and who helps Kristin Scott Thomas, whose daughter has been traumatised in a riding accident.

KISSING A FOOL (15)

Yet another comedy about the male fear of commitment and yet another film with nothing original to say on the matter. Stars David Schwimmer, best known as Ross in *Friends*.

THE LAND GIRLS (12)

Rachel Weiss, Anna Friel and Catherine McCormack are the "land girls" who take the place of the farmers who have departed for war. No surprises here, but it's nicely done.

THE LAST DAYS OF DISCO (15)

In the fictional club at the centre of Whit Stillman's dry and slightly sad comedy, everything sparkles - under the light from the glitterball. It's refreshing to find a work that is this enchanting and intelligent.

LOCK, STOCK & TWO SMOKING BARRELS (18)

This film's defining characteristic is its resilient morality. The picture is peopled by thugs, both amateur and professional. Young Eddy, who comes unstuck in a high-stakes card game, falls into the former category; but Hatchet Harry, to whom he owes \$500,000, is a dangerous old-school pro.

LOST IN SPACE (PG)

Yet another cult 1960s television series gets an expensive makeover but the film-makers have remained faithful to the original tone and the movie looks terrific. William Hurt stars as a frosty scientist who journeys with his family into space to save the Earth and, of course, learns how to bond with his kids in the process.

LOVE IS THE DEVIL (18)

Derek Jacobi gives a ferocious performance as Francis Bacon in this first feature from the acclaimed experimental film-maker, John Maybury. Among the film's many technical accomplishments are the blurred and grotesque visual compositions which transform simple images into thrashing flesh-storms which strongly evoke the artist's work.

THE MAGIC SWORD: QUEST FOR CAMELOT (U)

The first full-length product of Warner's new animation division, this looks and sounds even cheaper than the average Disney effort. But there's an edge of weirdness that will keep parents entertained, if it doesn't scare the children out of their wits.

SAVING PRIVATE RYAN (15)

Captain John Miller (Tom Hanks) is dispatched with his squad to seek out a young private behind enemy lines and bring him home. It is unlikely that many viewers will emerge from the picture warmed by emotional catharsis - it is the devastating battle sequences which are branded on the memory.

THE SPANISH PRISONER (PG)

David Mamet's intricate little thriller is a playful exercise in twisting a plot until it locks; there is a scientific detachment about the way he explores every permutation of his Kafkaesque scenario.

SPECIES II (18)

Ludicrous science-fiction horror about a strand of alien DNA carried back to Earth in the bodies of astronauts.

THE X-FILES (15)

David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson reprise their roles as FBI agents Mulder and Scully and, for their first big-screen outing, The leads are most engaging, through little dialogue they manage to convey great tenderness.

CINEMA
COUNTRYWIDE

ABERDEEN

ODEON (01224-587160) *The Horse Whisperer* (PG) *Lethal Weapon 4* (15) *Seven Years in Tibet* (PG) *Saving Private Ryan* (15) *There's Something About Mary* (15) *Dr Dolittle* (PG) *Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels* (18)

VIRGIN (01224-202050) *The Apostle* (12) *Lolita* (18) *The X-Files* (15) *Godzilla* (PG) *The Indian in the Cupboard* (PG) *Saving Private Ryan* (15) *The Horse Whisperer* (PG) *Lethal Weapon 4* (15) *Dr Dolittle* (PG) *Armageddon* (12) *Lost in Space* (PG) *There's Something About Mary* (15)

BIRMINGHAM
MAC (0121-440 3838) *Regeneration* (15) *The Big Lebowski* (18) *Dance of the Wind* (U) *The Horse Whisperer* (PG)

ODEON (0121-643 2040) *Lethal Weapon 4* (15) *Paulie* (U) *The Horse Whisperer* (PG) *The X-Files* (15) *Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels* (18) *The Little Mermaid* (U) *Gang Related* (15) *Kissing a Fool* (15) *Dr Dolittle* (PG) *Titanic* (12) *There's Something About Mary* (15) *Saving Private Ryan* (15) *Armageddon* (12)

ARCADIAN CENTRE VIRGIN (0541-555177) *Saving Private Ryan* (15) *Godzilla* (PG) *Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels* (18) *Lost in Space* (PG) *Wool* (15) *Lethal Weapon 4* (15) *Dr Dolittle* (PG) *Armageddon* (12) *There's Something About Mary* (15)

GREAT PARK VIRGIN CINEMA (4530465) *Armageddon* (12) *Dr Dolittle* (PG) *Saving Private Ryan* (15) *Barney's Great Adventure* (U) *The Indian in the Cupboard* (PG) *The X-Files* (15) *The Land Girls* (12) *The Horse Whisperer* (PG) *Lethal Weapon 4* (15) *Lost in Space* (PG) *The Magic Sword: Quest for Camelot* (U) *There's Something About Mary* (15) *Godzilla* (PG) *Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels* (18) *The Little Mermaid* (U)

BRADFORD
ODEON (01426-915550) *Saving Private Ryan* (15) *Lethal Weapon 4* (15) *There's Something About Mary* (15) *Grumpy Old Men* (12) *Great Expectations* (15) *Dr Dolittle* (PG)

PRIESTLEY CENTRE FOR THE ARTS (01274-820 666) *Evil Dead 2* (18) *The Horse Whisperer* (PG)

CARLISLE
LONSDALE (01228-514654) *There's Something About Mary* (15) *U-Turn* (18) *Godzilla* (PG) *Paulie* (U) *The Witches* (PG) *Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels* (18) *The Land Girls* (12) *Mr Holland's Opus* (PG) *Lethal Weapon 4* (15) *Saving Private Ryan* (15) *Dr Dolittle* (PG) *The Magic Sword: Quest for Camelot* (U) *Barney's Great Adventure* (U)

CLYDEBANK
UCI (0990-888990) *The Magic Sword: Quest for Camelot* (U) *Maharaja* (PG) *Lost in Space* (PG) *The X-Files* (15) *Saving Private Ryan* (15) *Moose Hunt* (PG) *Lethal Weapon 4* (15) *Dr Dolittle* (PG) *Divorcing Jack* (15) *The Wedding Singer* (12) *Godzilla* (PG) *The Little Mermaid* (U) *The Horse Whisperer* (PG) *Barney's Great Adventure* (U) *Armageddon* (12) *Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels* (18) *There's Something About Mary* (15)

COVENTRY
ODEON (01203-520923) *Armageddon* (12) *Godzilla* (PG) *Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels* (18) *There's Something About Mary* (15) *Paulie* (U) *Moose Hunt* (PG) *The Little Mermaid* (U) *The Apostle* (12) *Saving Private Ryan* (15) *Lethal Weapon 4* (15)

EDINBURGH
ABC FILM CENTRE (0131-228 1638) *Lethal Weapon 4* (15) *Saving Private Ryan* (15) *There's Something About Mary* (15)

ABC WESTER HAILES (0131-442 2200) *Lethal Weapon 4* (15) *Dr Dolittle* (PG) *The Horse Whisperer* (PG) *Lethal Weapon 4* (15) *Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels* (18) *There's Something About Mary* (15) *Saving Private Ryan* (15)

CAMEO (0131-228 4141) *Trainspotting* (18) *There's Something About Mary* (15) *Jack Malt* (15) *Natural Born Killers* (18) *Love Is the Devil* (18) *The Spanish Prisoner* (PG) *A Life Less Ordinary* (15) *Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels* (18)

DOMINION (0131-447 4771) *Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels* (18) *Saving Private Ryan* (15) *The Land Girls* (12) *Lethal Weapon 4* (15)

ODEON (0131-668 2101) *Titanic* (12) *Star Kid* (PG) *Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels* (18) *The Little Mermaid* (U) *Dr Dolittle* (PG) *The Horse Whisperer* (PG) *Lethal Weapon 4* (15) *Moose Hunt* (PG) *There's Something About Mary* (15) *Saving Private Ryan* (15)

UCI (0990-888990) *Barney's Great Adventure* (U) *Saving Private Ryan* (15) *Lost in Space* (PG) *The Exorcist* (25th Anniversary Release) (18) *Dolittle* (PG) *Divorcing Jack* (15) *Lethal Weapon 4* (15) *The Land Girls* (12) *Armageddon* (12) *Kissing a Fool* (15) *Godzilla* (PG) *There's Something About Mary* (15) *Maharaja* (PG) *The Horse Whisperer* (PG) *The X-Files* (15) *Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels* (18) *The Little Mermaid* (U) *The Magic Sword: Quest for Camelot* (U)

GLASGOW
ABC CLARKE RD (0141-637 2641) *There's Something About Mary* (15) *Saving Private Ryan* (15) *Lethal Weapon 4* (15) *Dr Dolittle* (PG)

ABC SAUCHIEHALL ST (332 1592) *Saving Private Ryan* (15) *Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels* (18) *Kissing a Fool* (15) *Cousin Betty* (15) *The Spanish Prisoner* (PG) *There's Something About Mary* (15)

THE BOMBAY (0141-419 0722) *Isht* (PG) *Dil To Pagal Hai* (PG)

CALEDONIAN GROSVENOR (0141-339 4298) *Gang Related* (15) *Saving Private Ryan* (15) *The Godfather* (18) *Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls* (PG) *The Truman Show* (PG) *Lethal Weapon 4* (15)

ODEON (0141-333 3413) *The Exorcist* (25th Anniversary Release) (18) *Armageddon* (12) *Saving Private Ryan* (15) *Dr Dolittle* (PG) *Lethal Weapon 4* (15) *The Horse Whisperer* (PG) *There's Something About Mary* (15) *Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels* (18)

SPRINGFIELD QUAY (0141-418 0345) *Sliding Doors* (15) *The X-Files* (15) *The Land Girls* (12) *Paws* (PG) *Saving Private Ryan* (15) *The Magic Sword: Quest for Camelot* (U) *Anastasia* (U) *Das Boot: The Director's Cut* (15) *The Exorcist* (25th Anniversary Release) (18) *Armageddon* (12) *Lethal Weapon 4* (15) *The Horse Whisperer* (PG) *Dr Dolittle* (PG) *There's Something About Mary* (15) *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (PG) *Dr Dolittle* (PG) *Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels* (18) *Armageddon* (12)

VIRGIN FORCE PARKHEAD (0541-555136) *Lethal Weapon 4* (15) *Godzilla* (PG) *The X-Files* (15) *Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels* (18) *The Magic Sword: Quest for Camelot* (U) *There's Something About Mary* (15) *Armageddon* (12) *Lost in Space* (PG) *Dr Dolittle* (PG) *Saving Private Ryan* (15)

GLENROTHES
KINGSWAY (01592-750980) *Lost in Space* (PG) *The Wedding Singer* (12) *Dr Dolittle* (PG)

HULL
ODEON (0345-419900) *Godzilla* (PG) *Lethal Weapon 4* (15) *Saving Private Ryan* (15) *The Horse Whisperer* (PG) *The X-Files* (15) *Paulie* (U) *The Land Girls* (12) *The Magic Sword: Quest for Camelot* (U) *Armageddon* (12) *Great Expectations* (15) *Dr Dolittle* (PG) *Flubber* (U) *Mr Magoo* (PG) *Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels* (18) *Lost in Space* (PG) *There's Something About Mary* (15)

UCI 8 ST ANDREWS QUAY (0990-888990) *Good Burger* (PG) *Lethal Weapon 4* (15) *Moose Hunt* (PG) *There's Something About Mary* (15) *Kundun* (12) *The Horse Whisperer* (PG) *Armageddon* (12) *Saving Private Ryan* (15) *Barney's Great Adventure* (U) *The Truman Show* (PG) *Lost in Space* (PG) *Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels* (18) *The X-Files* (15) *Divorcing Jack* (15) *The Little Mermaid* (U) *Dr Dolittle* (PG)

LEEDS
ABC(0113-245 2665) *The Horse Whisperer* (PG) *Lost in Space* (PG) *Dr Dolittle* (PG) *The X-Files* (15) *Saving Private Ryan* (15)

COTTAGE ROAD (0113-230 2562) *Barney's Great Adventure* (U) *Dr Dolittle* (PG)

LOUNGE (0113-230 2562) *There's Something About Mary* (15) *Paulie* (U)

ODEON (0113-243 0031) *There's Something About Mary* (15) *Dr Dolittle* (PG) *Kundun* (12) *Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels* (18) *Armageddon* (12) *Saving Private Ryan* (15) *Lethal Weapon 4* (15)

WARNER VILLAGE (0113-279 9855) *Lethal Weapon 4* (15) *The X-Files* (15) *There's Something About Mary* (15) *Saving Private Ryan* (15) *The Horse Whisperer* (PG) *Lost in Space* (PG) *Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels* (18) *Barney's Great Adventure* (U) *Armageddon* (12) *Godzilla* (PG)

LEICESTER
ODEON FREEMANS PARK (0115-255 5512) *Star Kid* (PG) *Barney's Great Adventure* (U) *Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels* (18) *Lethal Weapon 4* (15) *Flubber* (U) *The Magic Sword: Quest for Camelot* (U) *Lost in Space* (PG) *Saving Private Ryan* (15) *The Land Girls* (12) *The X-Files* (15) *There's Something About Mary* (15) *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (PG) *Dr Dolittle* (PG) *The Little Mermaid* (U) *Moose Hunt* (PG) *Afterglow* (15) *Dr Dolittle* (PG) *Godzilla* (PG)

WARNER VILLAGE (0115-282 7733) *Species II* (18) *The X-Files* (15) *Armageddon* (12) *Lethal Weapon 4* (15) *The Little Mermaid* (U) *Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels* (18) *Dr Dolittle* (PG) *There's Something About Mary* (15) *Saving Private Ryan* (15) *Godzilla* (PG) *The Horse Whisperer* (PG) *Lost in Space* (PG)

LIVERPOOL
ABC ALLERTON (0151-724 3550) *Blues Brothers 2000* (PG) *Armageddon* (12)

ODEON (01426-7071254) *The Little Mermaid* (U) *Saving Private Ryan* (15) *There's Something About Mary* (15) *Lethal Weapon 4* (15) *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (PG) *Dr Dolittle* (PG) *Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels* (18) *Armageddon* (12)

VIRGIN (0541-555146) *Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels* (18) *Armageddon* (12) *There's Something About Mary* (15) *Godzilla* (PG) *Lost in Space* (PG) *The Horse Whisperer* (PG) *Lethal Weapon 4* (15) *Saving Private Ryan* (15) *Barney's Great Adventure* (U) *Dr Dolittle* (PG)

WOOLTON PICTURE HOUSE (0151-428 1191) *Dr Dolittle* (PG) *Saving Private Ryan* (15)

MANCHESTER
ARENA SEVEN CINEMAS (0161-839 0700) *Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels* (18) *There's Something About Mary* (15) *Saving Private Ryan* (15) *Paulie* (U) *The Land Girls* (12) *The Magic Sword: Quest for Camelot* (U) *Armageddon* (12) *Great Expectations* (15) *Dr Dolittle* (PG) *Flubber* (U) *Mr Magoo* (PG) *Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels* (18) *Lost in Space* (PG) *There's Something About Mary* (15)

CINCEITY (0161-445 8181) *The Real Howard Spitz* (PG) *The Spanish Prisoner* (PG) *Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels* (18) *Dil Se* (NC) *Dr Dolittle* (PG) *Natural Born Killers* (18)

FORUM THEATRE WYTHENSHAW (0161-437 9663) *Women On the Verge Of A Nervous Breakdown* (15)

ODEON (01426-950148) *James And The Giant Peach* (U) *Dr Dolittle* (PG) *Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels* (18) *Armageddon* (12) *Saving Private Ryan* (15) *The Land Girls* (12) *There's Something About Mary* (15) *The X-Files* (15) *Lethal Weapon 4* (15) *Good Will Hunting* (15)

UCI TRAFFORD CENTRE (0870-603 4567) *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (PG) *Species II* (18) *The Last Days of Disco* (15) *He Got Game* (18) *Lost in Space* (PG) *Saving Private Ryan* (15) *Armageddon* (12) *The Store* (PG) *Whisperer* (PG) *Dr Dolittle* (PG) *The Little Mermaid* (U) *Kissing a Fool* (15) *Lethal Weapon 4* (15) *Barney's Great Adventure* (U) *Titanic* (12) *Dil Se* (NC) *There's Something About Mary* (15) *Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels* (18) *The Wedding Singer* (12) *Divorcing Jack* (15) *Armageddon* (12) *Girls' Night* (15)

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
ODEON (0191-221191) *The Apostle* (12) *Lethal Weapon 4* (15) *Dr Dolittle* (PG) *Saving Private Ryan* (15) *Murder's Wedding* (15) *Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels* (18) *There's Something About Mary* (15)

WARNER VILLAGE (0191-221 0222) *The X-Files* (15) *There's Something About Mary* (15) *Lethal Weapon 4* (15)

THEATRE

COUNTRYWIDE

ABERDEEN
HADDO HOUSE Hall, Orkney
A highly charged production of Shakespeare's tale of love and jealousy in the court of Cyprus. 26 Sept. 7.30pm. £5.50. concs £4.50. (01651-851770)

HIS MAJESTY'S Jesus Christ
Superstar Tim Rice and Lloyd Webber's acclaimed biblical musical. From 29 Sept. Mon-Sat 7.30pm, mat 2.30pm, Wed 7.30pm, Thu 7.30pm, Fri 7.30pm, Sat 7.30pm. concs available. Rosemount Viaduct (01224-641122)

BIRMINGHAM
BIRMINGHAM REP Hamlet
Alexander directs this classic tale of a prince and his revenge. Mon-Sat 7.30pm, 10pm, Sun 10.30pm. £5-19. Broad Street (0121-236 4455)

THE DOOR - BIRMINGHAM REP
Confidence Drama from prolific playwright Judy Upton. Mon-Sat 7.30pm, ends 3 Oct. £5, concs £7. Standby & Veterans £5. Broad Street (0121-236 4455)

BRADFORD
ALHAMBRA Theatre Smokey Joe's Cafe - The Song Of Love
And Stoller. The rock and roll musical. 26 Sept. 7.30pm & 7.30pm. £5.50-£22.50. concs available. Beegle Nights at the Alhambra. In a brand new 1970s musical. 29, 30, 1 Oct. 7.30pm, 2 & 3 Oct. 5.30pm & 8.30pm. £5-£21.50. Morley Street (01274-752000)

CONVENTRY
BELGRADE Theatre Good Grief
Penelope Keith is directed by Ned Sherrin in the stage adaptation of Keith Waterhouse's novel. 26 Sept. 8pm. £5. Conventry (01203-553055)

DERBY
ASSEMBLY Rooms Johnny Johnson
National premiere of Kurt Weill's World War I drama. 26 Sept. 7.30pm. £8, conc £6. Market Place (01332-255800)

DERBY Playhouse Blues In The Night
Musical featuring great blues and jazz songs. 26 Sept. 7.30pm & 7.30pm. £7.50-£16. The Collector Stage adaptation of John Ford's chilling psychological thriller. 2 & 3 Oct. 7.30pm, ends 17 Oct. £5.50-£14.50. Theatre Walk (01332-363275)

EDINBURGH
COLLECTIVE Gallery Freaks
Multi media week long residency resulting in public sculpture of work. 2 & 3 Oct. 8pm. Free. Cockburn Street (0131-220 1260)

ROYAL LYCEUM Britannia Rules
Lochhead's tale of Glasgow's encephalic. Tue-Sat 7.45pm, ends 3 Oct. £7-£12.50 (Tue-Thru). £8-£15 (Fri-Sat). concs available. Grindlay Street (0131-229 9697)

TRAVERSE Theatre Beal Nam Breag
(Mouth Of Lies) Musical theatre production in Gaelic with a simultaneous English translation (telling the story of 17th century conflict). 30 Sept. 8pm. £8, concs £4. Cambridge Street (0131-228 1404)

GLASGOW
ARCHES Theatre Spurr
Orchestral black comedy featuring a lesbian outlaw, scientist, detective and a businessman. 29 Sept. 7.30pm, ends 10 Oct. £5.50. concs £3.50. Smellie + Beale's is ended after being caught with a 16 year old boy provoking an examination of the relationship between sexuality and religion. From 29 Sept. 8pm, ends 3 Oct. £5.50. concs £3.50. Midland Street (0141-221 4001)

ARCHES Theatre Carnival
26 Sept. 7.30pm. £5.50. concs £3.50. Midland Street (0141-221 4001)

CITIZENS Theatre Men Should Weep
Glasgow tenement life in the 1880s is brought to life in Sam Lerner's tale, directed by John Haverhill. Tue-Sat, ends 17 Oct. £8, concs £2. Gorbals Street (0141-429 0022)

CITIZENS Theatre: CIRCLE
STUDIO The Fall Of The House Of Usher
Edgar Allan Poe's chilling classic adapted and directed by John Pope. Tue-Sat, 7.30pm, ends 17 Oct. £8, concs £2. Gorbals (0141-429 0022)

KING'S Theatre Grease
Like George stars in the stage version of the hit film. Mon-Sat 7.30pm, 26, 30 Sept. 2.30pm, ends 1 Oct. £5.50. concs available. Bath Street (0141-287 5511)

JAMES ARNOTT Theatre, UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW
Knives In Hens
New collaborative production of David Harrower's award winning play. 26 Sept. 7.30pm. £4, concs £2. (0141-287 5511)

LAURENCE Theatre: LAWRENCE
Phaedra's Love
Sarah Kane's controversial re-working of the Hippolytus myth. Not suitable for children. 28 & 29 Sept. 7.45pm, £5, concs £3. Queen Street (01484-430528)

LEEDS
WEST YORKSHIRE Playhouse:
COURTYARD Theatre Villain
Steven Berkoff's look at evil in Shakespeare. 26 Sept. 7.45pm. £8.50-£17. Quarry Hill Mount (0113-213 7700)

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LEICESTER
HAYMARKET Theatre The Rink
Kander & Ebb's sassy musical. 26 Sept. 7.30pm. £8-£18. concs available. Perfect Pitch John Godber's comedy about two sets of warring carers. Tue-Sat 7.30pm. £6.50-£14.50. concs available. Looking for The Sully. A tale of intrigue, in-laws, outlaws and lost relatives. 2 & 3 Oct. 7.45pm. £6-£9, concs available. Belgrave Gate (0116-253 9797)

LIVERPOOL
LIVERPOOL Theatre Guiding
Scar Jonathan Harvey's tender account of the life of Hillsborough disaster survivor. Mon-Sat 8pm, ends 31 Oct. £6.50-£11 concs available. Hope Street (0151-709 4776)

MANCHESTER
LIBRARY Theatre Jake's Women
Neil Simon's comedy about a New York writer battling to separate fact and fiction. Mon-Thru 7.30pm, Fri-Sat 8pm. 30 Sept 8pm, ends 10 Oct. £5-£15. concs available. Central Library, St Peter's Square (0161-236 7110)

OPERA House Oliver! Russ Abbot
stars in Lionel Bart's Dickensian musical. Mon-Sat 7.30pm, Wed & Sat 2.30pm, ends 30 Jan. £10-£29. Quay Street (0161-242 2503)

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
GULDSKIAN Studio Theatre
Goodnight Children Everywhere
Drama about the emotional fragility of family relationships. Mon-Sat 7.15pm, 1 Oct. 2.30pm, ends 3 Oct. £7-£18. Kings Walk (0191-230 5151)

NEWCASTLE Playhouse
Bartholomew Fair
Jonathan's theatrical drama is sympathetically staged for the RSC. In rep Mon-Sat 7.15pm, 1 Oct. 2.30pm, ends 3 Oct. £7-£18. Kings Walk (0191-230 5151)

THEATRE ROYAL The Merchant Of Venice
BSC's production of Shakespeare's drama about love and money. In rep Mon-Sat 7.15pm, 1 Oct. 1.30pm. £4-£34. Grey Street (0191-232 2061)

NOTTINGHAM
BONNINGTON Theatre.
ARNOLD LEISURE CENTRE
The Man Who Woke Up In The Dark
Schindler's List on the stage. 26 Sept. 7.30pm. £7.50. concs £6. High Street (0115-9670114)

NOTTINGHAM Playhouse
The Boy Friend
A sizzling new version of Sandy Wilson's jazz musical. Mon-Sat 7.30pm, ends 10 Oct. £3-£18.50. East Circus Street (0115-941 9419)

PERTH
PERTH Theatre Pride And Prejudice
David Pountney's adaptation of Austen's classic tale of love and betrayal. Mon-Sat 7.30pm, Sat 2.30pm, ends 3 Oct. £5-£13. concs available. High Street (01738-621091)

PITLOCHRY
PITLOCHRY Festival Theatre
Funny Money
Ray Cooney's farce. 2 Oct. 8pm, 30 Sept, 2pm, ends 10 Oct. £12-£20. concs available. A Voyage Round My Father John Mortimer's auto-biographical account of his relationship with his father. 29 Sept. 8pm. £12.50-£15. concs available. A Street Car Named Desire Tennessee Williams' tragic drama of Southern passions. 26 Sept. 1 Oct. 8pm. £12-£15. concs available. (01796-472680)

SCARBOROUGH
STEPHEN JOSEPH Theatre:
MCARTHY AUDITOR
Sweet Phoebe
Michael Gough's comedy about a dog who worms her way into his mistress's house and hearts. 26 Sept. 10.30pm. £4. Westborough (01723-370541)

STEPHEN JOSEPH Theatre:
THE ROUND LOVE
Songs For Shopkeepers And Archbishops
Tina Turner's comedy about a single writer with professional and romantic aspirations. 26 Sept. 7.30pm, Sept 26, 2.30pm, ends 26 Sept. £9-£12.50. Westborough (01723-370541)

VIA DOLOROSA David Hare
writes and performs his meditation on a trip to Israel and Palestine. Royal Court (at the Duke Of York's) St Martin's Lane, WC2 (0171-565 5000) & Lek St, Mon-Sat 7.30pm, ends 3 Oct. £18-50, benches 10p. Mon - all seats £5. 90 mins.

SHEFFIELD
STUDIO New Dealers
Physical show about the leader of Sheffield's most notorious gang. 2 & 3 Oct. 7.45pm. £5. concs £3.50. Norfolk Street (0114-276 9922)

CRUCIBLE Theatre All Credit To The Ladies
Alan Ayckworth's study of male friendship. Tue-Fri 7.30pm, Sat 6pm & 9pm, ends 17 Oct. £6.50-£14.50. Norfolk Street (0114-276 9922)

STIRLING
MACROBERT Arts Centre A Clockwork Orange
Anthony Burgess' disturbing tale of youth violence. From 29 Sept. Tue-Sat. 7.30pm. £9, concs £4.50. The Seed Carriers Stephen Mottram's Animals presents a fusion of puppets, visual art and electro-acoustic music. 30 Sept. 7.45pm. £5, concs £3. The Granny Knot An old woman takes her last trip. 1 Oct. 7.45pm. £6, concs £3. (01786-461081)

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON
THE OTHER PLACE The Comedy Of Errors
Highly charged production of Shakespeare's comedy of mistaken identities. 29 & 30 Sept. 7.30pm. £12-£25. Henry V Shakespeare's classic is presented by The Watermill Theatre Company. 1-3 Oct. 7.30pm, 1 Oct. 2.30pm. £10, concs £7.50. Southem Lane (01789-25623)

SWAN Theatre The Woman Who Cooked Her Husband
The Blackbirds. Sept 25-26, 7.30pm. £6-£12. Jekyll & Hyde Compass Theatre's eerie new adaptation of Stevenson's novel. 29 Sept 3 Oct. 7.30pm, 1 Oct. 2.30pm. £6-£14. Waterdale, CV57 (01789-295623)

WELLINGBOROUGH
THE CASTLE Perfect Pitch
See Leicester. 26 Sept. 7.30pm. £9, concs £5.50. Castle View (01933-270007)

YORK
THEATRE ROYAL Lord Of The Flies
William Golding's classic tale of schoolboys who crash land on a deserted island. Mon-Sat 7.30pm, ends 10 Oct. £6-£13.25. concs available. St. Leonards Place (01904-623568)

THE BLUE ROOM Nicola Kidman
stars in David Hare's adaptation of Schindler's List. 10.30pm. 26 Sept. Warehouse Earham Street, WC2 (011-369 1732) & Covent Garden. Mon-Sat 7.30pm, ends 12 Oct. £12-£25.

MISS EVER'S BOYS David
Pidd's disturbing drama looks at the issues surrounding medical experimentation on unknown black citizens. Barlick: The Pit Barlick Centre, £2 (0171-638 8911) & Barlick: The Pit Barlick Centre, £2 (0171-638 8911)

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EXHIBITIONS

ABERDEEN
ABERDEEN ART GALLERY Into The New Age
Scottish Art 1945-1962. Over 40 works by leading Scottish artists. Mon-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 2pm-5pm, ends 17 Oct. free. Schoolhill (01224-646333)

BIRMINGHAM
ICOM GALLERY Sorted
Teenage life in the 1950s. 11am-5pm, ends 27 Sep. free. Brindleyplace, Oozells Square (0121-248 0708)

BRADFORD
NATIONAL MUSEUM In Exile
Donovan Wylie's important young contemporary photographer exhibits. Tue-Sun & Bank Holidays 10am-5pm, ends 11 Nov. free. Upper Parkgate (01274-727488)

EDINBURGH
CITY ART CENTRE Full Of The Warm South
The Colourists and France Examining the impact of France on Glasgow. 26 Sept. 10am-5pm, ends 3 Oct. £3, concs £2 (to centre) Market Street (0131-529 3993)

GLASGOW
GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART Representations Of Death, Dying And Disposal
In Art. Themed work by Rembrandt, Manet and John Ruskin. Mon-Thru 9.30am-5.30pm, Sat 10am-12noon, ends 3 Oct. free. Renfrew Street (0141-353 4500)

LEEDS
HENRY MOORE Institute Les
Carbomagnes: Auguste Rodin Drawings made during the Royal Canadian dance company's tour to France in 1966. Mon-Sun 10am-5.30pm, Wed 10am-5pm, ends 3 Jan. free. The Headrow (0113-234 3158/246 7467)

LIVERPOOL
TATE GALLERY LIVERPOOL Urban
Modern work examining city life. Ends Apr 99, free. 150-152, 154-156, 158-160, 162-164, 166-168, 170-172, 174-176, 178-180, 182-184, 186-188, 190-192, 194-196, 198-200, 202-204, 206-208, 210-212, 214-216, 218-220, 222-224, 226-228, 230-232, 234-236, 238-240, 242-244, 246-248, 250-252, 254-256, 258-260, 262-264, 266-268, 270-272, 274-276, 278-280, 282-284, 286-288, 290-292, 294-296, 298-300, 302-304, 306-308, 310-312, 314-316, 318-320, 322-324, 326-328, 330-332, 334-336, 338-340, 342-344, 346-348, 350-352, 354-356, 358-360, 362-364, 366-368, 370-372, 374-376, 378-380, 382-384, 386-388, 390-392, 394-396, 398-400, 402-404, 406-408, 410-412, 414-416, 418-420, 422-424, 426-428, 430-432, 434-436, 438-440, 442-444, 446-448, 450-452, 454-456, 458-460, 462-464, 466-468, 470-472, 474-476, 478-480, 482-484, 486-488, 490-492, 494-496, 498-500, 502-504, 506-508, 510-512, 514-516, 518-520, 522-524, 526-528, 530-532, 534-536, 538-540, 542-544, 546-548, 550-552, 554-556, 558-560, 562-564, 566-568, 570-572, 574-576, 578-580, 582-584, 586-588, 590-592, 594-596, 598-600, 602-604, 606-608, 610-612, 614-616, 618-620, 622-624, 626-628, 630-632, 634-636, 638-640, 642-644, 646-648, 650-652, 654-656, 658-660, 662-664, 666-668, 670-672, 674-676, 678-680, 682-684, 686-688, 690-692, 694-696, 698-700, 702-704, 706-708, 710-712, 714-716, 718-720, 722-724, 726-728, 730-732, 734-736, 738-740, 742-744, 746-748, 750-752, 754-756, 758-760, 762-764, 766-768, 770-772, 774-776, 778-780, 782-784, 786-788, 790-792, 794-796, 798-800, 802-804, 806-808, 810-812, 814-816, 818-820, 822-824, 826-828, 830-832, 834-836, 838-840, 842-844, 846-848, 850-852, 854-856, 858-860, 862-864, 866-868, 870-872, 874-876, 878-880, 882-884, 886-888, 890-892, 894-896, 898-900, 902-904, 906-908, 910-912, 914-916, 918-920, 922-924, 926-928, 930-932, 934-936, 938-940, 942-944, 946-948, 950-952, 954-956, 958-960, 962-964, 966-968, 970-972, 974-976, 978-980, 982-984, 986-988, 990-992, 994-996, 998-1000.

LEEDS
GRAND Theatre The Bartered Bride
Orchestra. 26 Sept. 7.30pm. £5-£10. 1 & 3 Oct. 7.15pm. £3.50-£4.50. concs available. Grand Opera House (0113-222 6222)

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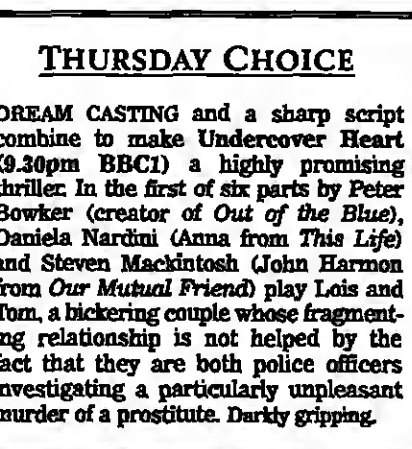
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THE WEEKEND REVIEW
The Independent 26 September 1999

ITV/Regions

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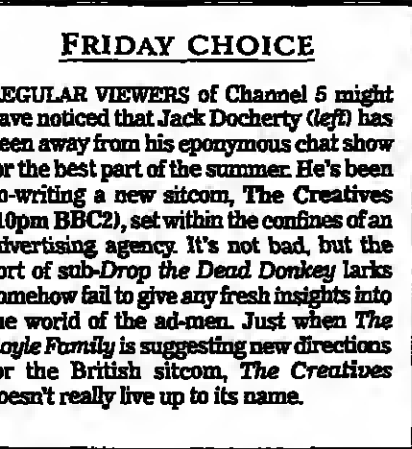
DREAM CASTING and a sharp script combine to make *Undercover Heart* (9.30pm BBC1) a highly promising thriller. In the first of six parts by Peter Bowker (creator of *Out of the Blue*), Daniela Nardini (Anna from *This Life*) and Steven Mackintosh (John Harmon from *Our Mutual Friend*) play Lois and Tom, a bickering couple whose fragmenting relationship is not helped by the fact that they are both police officers investigating a particularly unpleasant murder of a prostitute. Darky grime.

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THE WEEKEND REVIEW
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REGULAR VIEWERS of Channel 5 might have noticed that Jack Docherty (left) has been away from his eponymous chat show for the best part of the summer. He's been co-writing a new sitcom, *The Creatives* (10pm BBC2), set within the confines of an advertising agency. It's not bad, but the sort of sub-Drop the Dead Donkey larks somehow fail to give any fresh insights into the world of the ad-men. Just when *The Royle Family* is suggesting new directions for the British sitcom, *The Creatives* doesn't really live up to its name.

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4,300 York (1950-51), 4,000 Formula Two (1952-53), 5,000 Surfing Car (1953-54), 1,000 Yale Varsity (1954-55), 1,000 Football (1955-56), 1,000 Yale Varsity (1956-57), 1,000 Football (1957-58), 1,000 Wrestling (1958-59), 2,500 Class.

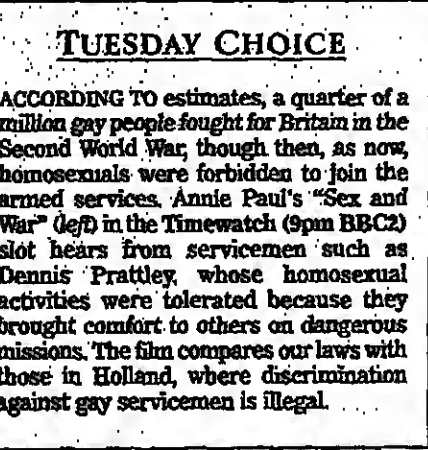
ONE COLLEGE

1950-51, 1952-53, 1954-55, 1,200 Neighbors (1956-57), 1,200 Class (1958-59), 1,200 Neighbors (1959-60), 1,200 Class (1960-61), 1,200 The BN (1961-62), 1,200 Class (1962-63), 1,200 Neighbors (1963-64), 1,200 Class (1964-65), 1,200 Neighbors (1965-66), 1,200 Class (1966-67), 1,200 Neighbors (1967-68), 1,200 Class (1968-69), 1,200 Neighbors (1969-70), 1,200 Class (1970-71), 1,200 Neighbors (1971-72), 1,200 Class (1972-73), 1,200 Neighbors (1973-74), 1,200 Class (1974-75), 1,200 Neighbors (1975-76), 1,200 Class (1976-77), 1,200 Neighbors (1977-78), 1,200 Class (1978-79), 1,200 Neighbors (1979-80), 1,200 Class (1980-81), 1,200 Neighbors (1981-82), 1,200 Class (1982-83), 1,200 Neighbors (1983-84), 1,200 Class (1984-85), 1,200 Neighbors (1985-86), 1,200 Class (1986-87), 1,200 Neighbors (1987-88), 1,200 Class (1988-89), 1,200 Neighbors (1989-90), 1,200 Class (1990-91), 1,200 Neighbors (1991-92), 1,200 Class (1992-93), 1,200 Neighbors (1993-94), 1,200 Class (1994-95), 1,200 Neighbors (1995-96), 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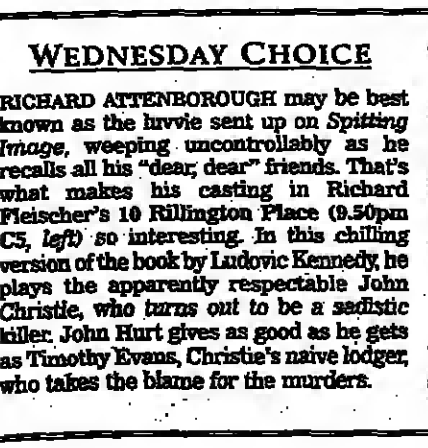


ACCORDING to estimates, a quarter of a million gay people fought for Britain in the Second World War; though then, as now, homosexuals were forbidden to join the armed services. Annie Paul's "Sex and War" (left) in the Timewatch (9pm BBC2) slot hears from servicemen such as Dennis Prattley, whose homosexual activities were tolerated because they brought comfort to others on dangerous missions. The film compares our laws with those in Holland, where discrimination against gay servicemen is illegal.

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ITV/Regions

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RICHARD ATTENBOROUGH may be best known as the huvie sent up on *Spitting Image*, weeping uncontrollably as he recalls all his "dear dear" friends. That's what makes his casting in Richard Fleischer's 10 Killington Place (9.50pm, CBS, left) so interesting. In this chilling version of the book by Ludovic Kennedy, he plays the apparently respectable John Christie, who turns out to be a sadistic killer. John Hurt gives as good as he gets as Timothy Evans, Christie's naive lodger, the blame for the murder.

[illegible]

- [illegible]

SUNDAY TELEVISION

BBC1

- 7.00 The Pink Panther Show** (R) (5542008). 7.20 Match of the Day (S) (T) (100573). 8.30 Breakfast with Frost (S) (T) (4232). 9.30 The Heaven and Earth Show (S) (T) (16719). 10.30 Top Gear (R) (S) (T) (6802). 11.00 Porridge (R) (T) (8214). 11.30 Countryfile (S) (T) (6973). 12.00 On the Record (S) (T) (57843). 1.00 EastEnders (R) (S) (T) (578264).
- 2.25 FILM The Hallelujah Trail** (1995). Lumbering comedy-Western. With Lee Remick, Burt Lancaster (4822553).
- 4.45 The Pink Panther Show** (R) (5542008). 5.05 LifeLine (S) (T) (805592). 5.45 News: Weather (T) (5334263). 5.55 Regional News and Weather (5334263).
- 5.40 Songs of Praise** (S) (T) (896602).
- 6.15 Antiques Roadshow**. The experts must over more heirlooms, this time in Wales (S) (T) (44294).
- 7.00 Last of the Summer Wine**. Long-running sitcom (R) (S) (T) (7263).
- 7.30 Wildlife on One** (R) (S) (T) (805).
- 8.00 Billyllydian**. New priest Father Aidan makes an immediate impression when he performs a miracle, by bringing back-ridden paragon Mary Cummins to her feet (S) (T) (80606).
- 8.50 News: Weather** (T) (598843).
- 9.05 Felling for a Dance**. Elizabeth's life is thrown into chaos with the death of her husband (S) (T) (80629).
- 9.55 FILM Clockwork Mike** (1994). Comic teacher Ian Hart makes a connection with troubled teenager at a special-needs school (S) (T) (82366).
- 11.30 Heart of the Matter** (S) (T) (780483). 12.30 The Sky at Night (S) (T) (509142).
- 12.30 FILM Head over Heels** (1979). Jaded lawyer John Heard resolves to have another go at his on-again, off-again affair with Mary Beth Hurt (S) (T) (75356).
- 2.05 Johns BBC News 24** (5458467). To 6am.

BBC2

- 6.00 Open University** (7849982). 8.35 Early Bird Catches the Worm (252986). 8.55 Country's Groceries (5781459). 9.30 The Thunderbirds (804821). 10.00 Garfield Boy (R) (S) (T) (614350). 10.00 Shirley Holmes (S) (T) (642700). 9.25 Rugrats (R) (S) (T) (643747). 9.55 Sweet Valley High (R) (S) (T) (781848). 10.35 Student Bodies (R) (S) (T) (77691). 10.40 Grange Hill (R) (S) (T) (47791). 11.05 Small World (529408). 11.20 Grange Hill (R) (S) (T) (47791). 11.50 Tom and Jerry (R) (S) (T) (134378). 12.05 Simpsons (R) (S) (T) (735382). 12.30 Robot Wars (S) (T) (36350). 1.00 Sunday Grandstand (S) (T) (8018506). 1.05 Tennis - Davis Cup Great Britain vs India (545973). 2.25 Reading from Asot (545982). 2.45 Tennis (586778). 3.05 Reading (77291). 3.20 Tennis (888585). 3.45 Racing (45114). 4.00 Tennis (578485). 4.20 Reading (802027). 4.35 Tennis (107755). 5.30 Motorcycling (697977).
- 5.45 CHOICE A Very Singular Man**. Portrait of Sir Edward Heath Sea Choice below (S) (T) (47600).
- 6.45 Star Trek: Voyager** (S) (T) (59714).
- 7.30 The Money Programme** (447).
- 8.00 Absolute Truth**. Documentary series on the Church of Rome (S) (T) (804602).
- 8.50 Trade Secrets** (S) (T) (249089).
- 9.00 The Nazis - a Warning from History** (R) (S) (T) (81282).
- 8.50 10 x 10** (S) (T) (109945).
- 10.00 Maximum Bob**. Surreal American drama series (S) (T) (855282).
- 10.45 Moviezone** (831973).
- 10.50 FILM Shaft** (1971). Seminal "blaxploitation" movie (T) (8256992).
- 12.25 Moviezone** (404848).
- 12.30 FILM Force of Evil** (1948). Crime drama, with John Garfield (T) (591883).
- 1.55 Close**. 2.00 Learning Zone (5333003). To 6am.

ITV Granada

- 6.00 GMTV** (68080). 8.00 Diggit (5546756). 9.25 Tiny Toon Adventures (R) (S) (T) (543382). 9.50 Extreme Ghostbusters (S) (T) (754534). 10.20 Morning Watch (S) (T) (755244). 11.20 Jonathan Dimbleby (S) (T) (908179). 12.00 News: Weather (T) (430868). 12.15 Granada News and Weather (T) (284546). 12.25 F1: Luxembourg Grand Prix Live (S) (T) (627214). 1.00 Murder, She Wrote (S) (T) (485084). 3.55 Station 5750 (77937). 4.50 Coronation Street (R) (S) (T) (285850).
- 5.50 House Style** (R) (T) (822534).
- 6.20 Cartoon Time** (332398).
- 6.40 Granada News** (T) (278553).
- 6.45 News: Weather** (T) (68357).
- 7.00 You've Been Framed** (T) (2331).
- 7.30 Coronation Street**. Audrey turns to Fred to swell her coffers (T) (673).
- 8.00 Heartbeat**. Greengrass sees an opportunity to fix the outcome of a local golf tournament (S) (T) (2553).
- 9.00 The Jump**. After her recent gruesome discoveries, Donna is desperate to cancel the prison break-out, but Cox assures her that it is too late - the "jump" is ready and if they call it off, George will have them both killed (S) (T) (8063).
- 10.00 News: Weather** (T) (577060).
- 10.15 Clive James Meets the Supermodels** (T) (257638).
- 11.20 F1: Luxembourg Grand Prix** (S) (T) (627214). 12.20 Sunday Night (S) (T) (780503). 1.20 In Bed with Meddler (R) (S) (T) (584770).
- 1.55 FILM Double Deception** (1993). James Russo as cop turned private eye in routine inquiries (86940).
- 3.30 H2O** (4455). 4.00 ITV Sport Classics (5790596). 4.25 TV Nightscreen (589848). 5.30 Morning News (41206). To 6am.

Channel 4

- 6.05 The Pink Panther Show** (R) (S) (5542008). 6.30 Little Dracula (R) (S) (T) (523700). 6.55 Ovide (R) (S) (T) (720). 7.00 Hallelujah Trail (R) (S) (T) (4822553). 7.30 Sharkey and George (R) (S) (T) (42391). 7.55 Biker Mice from Mars (587089). 8.20 The Odyssey (R) (S) (T) (433873). 8.45 Doug (R) (S) (T) (290078). 9.20 Saved by the Bell - The New Class (S) (T) (343292). 9.45 The Secret World of Alex Mack (R) (S) (T) (18852). 10.05 The Waltons (R) (S) (T) (6852). 11.30 Holyoke (R) (S) (T) (482640). 12.30 The Real World (R) (S) (T) (743637). 12.40 No Balls Allowed (S) (T) (771027).
- 1.00 FILM South of Algiers** (1954). Eric Portman in juvenile treasure-hunt adventure (523637).
- 2.45 Football Italia** (2377805).
- 3.00 FILM Carry On Teacher** (1982). Low humour at high school (T) (7639).
- 6.30 Scaphopod** (S) (T) (424646).
- 7.35 Desperately Seeking Something**. With Pete McCarthy (T) (7639).
- 8.00 Portillo's Progress**. Michael Portillo continues his search for an agenda for the Conservative Party (S) (T) (9945).
- 9.00 Heroes of Comedy**. The series celebrates great British comedians pays tribute to the Goons, Spike Milligan, Peter Sellers, Harry Secombe and Michael Bentine (R) (S) (T) (970).
- 10.00 Cops and Robbers** (1994). Grizzled cop Jack Polanco is placed in a stakeout at Chevy Chase's suburban family home. Bright but bland comedy (T) (84843).
- 11.45 Ultraviolet** (S) (T) (620669). 12.50 Trauma (R) (490757).
- 1.25 FILM Adhikar** (1989). Hind melodrama about the strained marriage between a champion jockey and a young singer (385566).
- 4.00 Calcutta** (R) (522732). 5.45 Bombay Chat (R) (527983). 5.55 Sesame Street (S) (T) (500402). To 7am.

Channel 5

- 6.00 Virgin Gardeners** (R) (S) (472060). 6.30 Hallelujah Trail (R) (S) (T) (4822553). 7.00 Dappleford Farm (R) (S) (T) (103840). 7.30 Michael (S) (T) (57756). 7.35 Wintzels House (R) (S) (T) (245027). 8.00 The Agony Hour (S) (T) (305344). 9.00 Roorp (5559602). 9.35 Pitch, Hit and Run (S) (T) (735521). 9.30 The Incredible Hulk (4435805). 10.30 Mirror, Mirror (R) (S) (T) (837937). 11.00 Darka (S) (T) (720531). 11.30 Singled Out (S) (T) (720531). 12.00 The Meg (S) (T) (5559737). 1.00 5 News (S) (T) (5552263). 1.20 The Movie Chart Show (S) (T) (547433). 1.50 Exclusive (5067389). 2.00 Family Affairs Omnibus (R) (S) (T) (3770348).
- 5.25 FILM Sabrina the Teenage Witch** (1995). Melissa Joan Hartland as a high-school girl with wish-making powers (S) (T) (5207835).
- 7.00 Tell the Truth**. Kristy Young hosts another studio discussion on a contentious topical subject. After the debate, viewers can phone in and register their points of view (S) (T) (7235640).
- 8.00 Fire Rescue**. Like London's Burning but don't find it realistic enough? Then you'll love this latest TV foray into real-life drama - it's a seat-of-the-pants documentary following professionals in action (721060).
- 9.00 FILM The Stone Killer** (1973). Trigger-happy cop Charles Bronson is sent from New York to Los Angeles to mellow out. But he's addicted to brutality, which comes in handy when he stumbles upon a top secret mob operation. Ugly, vicious thriller, more efficient than exciting. With Martin Balsam (T) (771575).
- 10.50 The Comedy Store**. Stand-up showcase (S) (T) (691023).
- 11.20 Sports Talk with Steve Scott** (S) (T) (78718). 11.55 Major League Baseball - Live (S) (T) (2737802). 4.40 Monsters (374983). 5.05 You Again? (589532). 5.30 Animal House (R) (S) (T) (479745). To 6am.

ITV/Regions

- Anglia**
As elsewhere except 12.30 Local News (585779). 1.00 Local News (585779). 1.20 Local News (585779). 1.40 Local News (585779). 2.00 Local News (585779). 2.20 Local News (585779). 2.40 Local News (585779). 3.00 Local News (585779). 3.20 Local News (585779). 3.40 Local News (585779). 4.00 Local News (585779). 4.20 Local News (585779). 4.40 Local News (585779). 5.00 Local News (585779). 5.20 Local News (585779). 5.40 Local News (585779). 6.00 Local News (585779). 6.20 Local News (585779). 6.40 Local News (585779). 7.00 Local News (585779). 7.20 Local News (585779). 7.40 Local News (585779). 8.00 Local News (585779). 8.20 Local News (585779). 8.40 Local News (585779). 9.00 Local News (585779). 9.20 Local News (585779). 9.40 Local News (585779). 10.00 Local News (585779). 10.20 Local News (585779). 10.40 Local News (585779). 11.00 Local News (585779). 11.20 Local News (585779). 11.40 Local News (585779). 12.00 Local News (585779). 12.20 Local News (585779). 12.40 Local News (585779). 1.00 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JASPER REES

TELEVISION REVIEW

MELODIA MESSENGER HITS HOLLYWOOD (Sun. TV)
Hollywood, and she was at it, really should have been called "Melodia". As the struggling, augmented personality rushed from meeting to meeting to audition, you could feel that encounter with her own had the summary effect of a sharp blow to the head. "It's a whole 'nother world," she said, reeling. "It's a whole 'nother language, too." Right now, said a voice coach she had hired to prime her for an audition, "she's in a good space in terms of where she's at." Melodia couldn't have put it worse herself.

It doesn't do to lose the keen around the conflict, but I think Messenger may be the first postmodern glamour model. She has a utilitarian relationship with her own image, as if they're employees rather than body parts. Their job is to knock on doors - that's where they get the name from. After an interview with a functions book, she complained that "the old go on about my breasts. But then what do I expect? There's a whole way to a woman's body, and it's not the way it's put in this film. It's put in the way of a diary of the next Messenger and her two assistants, spent knocking on doors to the world capital of silicone and padding. But, on a deeper level, it was exactly a film about what it would be like to knock on those doors if you happened to be a blonde model with a confidential staff member into your bra. After the appropriate surgery, it could easily have been presented by the fellow cast-show host, Cline James.

Messenger has no intention of becoming an actress, but for the purposes of her report, pretended to have aspirations. The only problem with this approach was that, precisely because she did not a very good actress, she did it rather badly. There was only one moment where truth seemed to seep through the carapace of pretence. An agent advised her that to make it in Hollywood she had to airbrush her boyfriend out of the picture. After the meeting, she was greeted by said boyfriend, a cheerful cross between Bobbie Ewing and Posh Spice. When he asked her how it had gone she bit her lip and, gratefully, lied. Only one week in.

BBC1

BBC2

ITV Carlton

Channel 4

Channel 5

- 7.00 The Munsters** (R) (T) (000404). **7.28 News: Weather** (420780).
- 7.30 Children's BBC: Noddy** (R) (288777). **7.40 C Bear and Jamal** (S) (488472). **8.08 Hero Tutank: the Adventures of Superman** (R) (S) (245779). **8.18 Live and Kicking** (S) (697473).
- 12.00 News: Weather** (T) (430720).
- 12.05 Grandstand** (S) (430872). **12.20 Football Focus** (R) (400530). **12.25 News: Weather** (R) (400530). **12.30 News: Weather** (R) (400530). **12.35 News: Weather** (R) (400530). **12.40 News: Weather** (R) (400530). **12.45 News: Weather** (R) (400530). **12.50 News: Weather** (R) (400530). **12.55 News: Weather** (R) (400530). **1.00 News: Weather** (R) (400530). **1.05 News: Weather** (R) (400530). **1.10 News: Weather** (R) (400530). **1.15 News: Weather** (R) (400530). **1.20 News: Weather** (R) (400530). **1.25 News: Weather** (R) (400530). **1.30 News: Weather** (R) (400530). **1.35 News: Weather** (R) (400530). **1.40 News: Weather** (R) (400530). **1.45 News: Weather** (R) (400530). **1.50 News: Weather** (R) (400530). **1.55 News: Weather** (R) (400530). **2.00 News: Weather** (R) (400530). **2.05 News: Weather** (R) (400530). **2.10 News: Weather** (R) (400530). **2.15 News: Weather** (R) (400530). **2.20 News: Weather** (R) (400530). **2.25 News: Weather** (R) 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26.9.1998

THE INDEPENDENT

26 September 1998

YOUR MONEY

PERSONAL FINANCE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

HOW TO MAKE IT • HOW TO SPEND IT

Know your car
value - caravans
by design

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BMW 318 -
good value
but little flair

PAGE 10

Health care
from hospital
hospitals

PAGE 12

Sex, lies - and the Dow Jones

The Clinton saga is adding to market jitters, with traders fearing the consequences if the President is forced to quit. By Paul Slade

Share traders are known the world over for their childish and misogynistic sense of humour. No surprises there, nor in the fact that the best - and worst - jokes about Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinski are those heard on dealing room floors.

But where it really matters they are unshockable. To put it crudely, who cares where Clinton puts his cigars as long as share prices are going up?

The White House, of course, has always understood this. In the early days of the Clinton sex scandal - should that be saga? - Democrat aides often lectured reporters that the real issue was "not Paula Jones, but the Dow Jones". Their point was that, with the Dow then climbing to regular record highs, American voters would be content to let the President's sex life take care of itself.

But now the Dow Jones is on a far shakier footing, with no end to its volatility in sight, and the two issues have become inextricably entwined. This is an issue not just for US savers, but for UK ones as well.

What Clinton does next will not only help to shape the Dow's future performance, but also to determine the extent to which US leadership can mitigate the effect of financial crisis everywhere from Brazil to Japan. What - if anything - should the beleaguered President do if he wants to help restore some measure of market stability?

One group which should be able to answer that question are the unit trust managers who pump billions of pounds of UK savers' money into America. Managers looking after some of the UK's biggest North America trusts are relieved that Clinton's video testimony was less damaging than had been expected, and now want him to tough it out.

David Ross is manager of the £471m Fairbairn American Equity unit trust, one of the biggest in the sector. He believes Wall Street's nerves are already stretched so tight that the last thing Clinton should do is resign. He says: "There's a lot of bear market mentality about. In a bear market, any news that can be interpreted in one of two ways will be interpreted in a negative light. Sudden news coming across the screens that Clinton had resigned would be seen as bad news."

Zanny Ferring, manager of Threadneedle's £310m American Growth trust, agrees, pointing out that there is no guarantee that replacing Clinton with vice-president Al Gore will spell an end to scandal in the White House. "Some people would consider Al Gore's political position over accepting funding for his election campaign is just as difficult as Clinton's," she says. "Fourth in line to the presidency is Newt



As the video tapes rolled this week, initial stockmarket fears were calmed when Bill Clinton came over better than anticipated

Ian Bartholomew

Gingrich - and no-one would want to see him anywhere near the Oval Office."

She too thinks that savers in her trust will be best served by Clinton soldiering on, and believes the worst may be over. "The longer the affair drags on, the less of an impact it will have," she says. "The fact that the Dow was up 38 points on the day Clinton's video testimony was broadcast when the rest of the world was about 3.5 per cent down I think speaks volumes."

Certainly US traders' initial reaction to Clinton's testimony was an encouraging one for the President. The Dow started Monday in nervous mood, falling by some 100 points

in anticipation of the broadcast. But by the time Clinton was halfway through his four-hour testimony, traders had recovered their confidence and the index climbed steadily for the rest of the day.

Ian Brady, manager of Perpetual's £37m American Growth unit trust, takes a slightly different view. He says: "On a 12-month view, I don't think it makes much difference what Clinton does. Remember, even at the time of the Kennedy assassination, the market went down, but it didn't stay down - it was very much a one-month wonder."

The cruel truth is that Clinton's influence on the US market is tiny next to that of Alan

Greenspan, chairman of the US Federal Reserve and the man responsible for setting American - and world - interest rates. A terrorist hoping to destabilise US and world markets would be far wiser to shoot Greenspan than Clinton or any other President for that matter.

Mr Brady argues: "Deep down, most people on Wall Street think that, as long as Greenspan is still in charge, then the US economy is not a big problem." Ms Ferring agrees, saying: "Thank God we've got Greenspan at the economic helm rather than Clinton."

It is Greenspan's role that will be crucial

in the months ahead. Both Brady and Ross hope to see a cut in US interest rates soon.

Mr Ross says: "I think the US economy will slow down. The question is the degree to which that will happen, and that is going to be a function of how quickly the Fed cuts rates. If the Fed starts to cut rates in time, then the outlook for equities is not too bad."

His guess is that the Dow will close 1998 at somewhere around 7,400 - about 7 per cent down on its level of 7,938 after Clinton's video broadcast on Monday. Mr Brady is more optimistic, predicting a 1998 close of around 8,250.

BRITISH SAVERS IN THE US

BRITISH SAVERS are pumping money into American stocks through unit trusts and pension funds.

In July, the UK unit trust industry's US holdings stood at £9.6bn. The top three US unit trusts alone have more than £1.5bn under-management.

In the year to July, UK small savers bought over £708m worth of units in North American trusts and UK institutions another £2.1bn. All North American trusts have suffered from recent events in Washington. But, as the table below shows, some have suffered much more than others.

Performance of North America unit trusts over three months to August 28, 1998. Initial investment: £1,000. Source: Moneyfacts

THE CLINTON FACTOR		
Performance of North America unit trusts over three months to 28 August 1998. Initial investment: £1,000. Source: Moneyfacts		
	£1,000 - 3 month return	rank
	(of 115)	
Best five		
Fidelity American	£1,041.19	1
Framlington Amer Growth	£1,003.23	2
F&C N Amer Exempt	£1,002.69	3
Lloyds TSB American	£993.50	4
Lloyds Bank N Amer & Gen	£991.75	5
Worst five		
Framlington Amer Smir Cos	£730.61	111
M&G American Smaller Cos	£738.10	112
M&G American Recovery	£733.02	113
AIB Goven Amer Strategy	£707.15	114
Schroder Canadian Inst	£582.16	115
Sector average	£895.36	

"I think we'll get at least one rate cut before the end of the year, and that will be enough to see a modest increase in the Dow from here," Mr Brady says. "But volatility is here to stay. In 1995, 1996 and in the first half of 1997, there was an amazing lack of volatility. We're back to average or above average volatility now, and I don't see that changing any time in the near future."

Ms Ferring says: "The market has come in for a lot of damage, and it is going to take a long time to repair. But, having said that, we are still up 5 per cent over the year to date."

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NAME JERRY BEIRNE AGE 47 OCCUPATION MERCHANT SEAMAN



Merchant seaman Jerry Beirne wants a second opinion for peace of mind Christopher Jones

Over the years Jerry has worked for a number of shipping companies. His employment situation is volatile and it has been difficult for him to make proper provision for retirement. He earns £12,800 a year and feels that his income prospects are likely to be £14,000 at best. He is single, with no dependents, and is a smoker.

Jerry has preserved pension benefits from a previous employment and is paying £80 a month into a personal pension. He is uncertain as to what pension he may be entitled to when he retires, probably at age 60.

He is happy with his other financial arrangements, although he is interested in a second opinion to give him peace of mind.

The adviser: Keith Owen, an independent financial adviser at R.K. Harrison Financial Services, Bradninch Court, Castle Street, Exeter (01392 245 5014).

The advice: Jerry was a member of the Merchant Navy Ratings Pension Fund for about 15 years, up to April 1994, when he ceased employment with P&O. Since then he has made his own pension provision.

In July 1992, he took out a Free Standing Additional Voluntary Contribution pension policy with Equity & Law for £60 net per month to help top up his pension benefits. When he left P&O in 1994, the policy was made paid-up. Earlier this year he converted the policy to a personal pension and has been paying £80 per month net into it since July.

Jerry considers himself to be a cautious investor, and therefore the choice of the with-profit fund within the policy seems appropriate. However, if he is able to increase the size of his pension contributions, he could consider a slightly more speculative stance with the additional payments. A managed fund is likely to provide better returns than a with-profit fund, although he should ensure that before he reaches 60 he locks in gains made up to that time.

Jerry has recently obtained a Retirement Pensions Forecast from the Benefits Agency by completing and returning form BR19. The good

news is that he is likely to receive the full basic state pension from age 65. The bad news is that the basic state pension has been falling further behind average earnings each year since the mid 1980s.

Jerry also will receive an additional pension under the State Earnings Related Pension Scheme and the old Graduated Scheme. This is worth £1,945 per annum. His basic state pension, in today's terms, is likely to be £3,363 per annum, the present rate for a single person. His total state pension should therefore be £5,308 per annum, increasing in line with inflation.

The last annual statement Jerry received from the Merchant Navy Scheme shows that he has a pre-

served pension of £3,126 per annum from age 62, the scheme's normal retirement date. This will increase up to retirement age, part of it - the Guaranteed Minimum Pension - by 7 per cent per annum and the rest by the rate of inflation - up to a maximum of 5 per cent per annum.

If Jerry took the benefits from 60 rather than 62, this would reduce the pension by 9.79 per cent. The figure of £3,126 per annum would therefore be reduced to £2,816.

His Equity & Law pension policy is estimated to provide a pension from age 60 of £3,109 per annum. This, however, assumes the underlying investments grow by 9 per cent per annum.

In today's terms, pensions of

£5,308, £2,816 and £1,867 - from the state, the Merchant Navy scheme and Equity & Law respectively - would total £9,991 per annum. This is three-quarters of his present earnings. However his state pension, which represents more than half of his total prospective pension, will not be payable until age 65, five years after he is likely to retire.

As he has no investment capital, Jerry should build up funds to bridge the pension gap between ages 60 and 65.

I suggest a PEP with Perpetual which - being the biggest player in the PEP market - has excellent administrative systems which should cope with the change to an ISA next year. Its High Income Fund, which

has 13 per cent in fixed interest stocks and is the top trust in its sector over the past five years, may suit Jerry's more cautious approach.

Jerry has a mortgage of £53,700 with Cheltenham & Gloucester backed by three endowment policies, two with Royal & Sun Alliance and one with Friends Provident. He has queried whether the Royal & Sun Alliance policies will reach their share of the anticipated amounts at maturity of about £48,000.

It appears that an investment growth rate of between 8 and 9 per cent per annum will be needed to produce the £48,000 from these two policies when they mature in 2008 and 2009. While future investment performance is not guaranteed, I would expect that there will be no shortfall when the policies mature.

Jerry has life cover provided under the three endowment policies which, being single and with no dependents, he does not really need. He might wish to consider a critical illness policy that would pay off the mortgage if he is diagnosed with a life-threatening or crippling illness. A policy for a sum assured of £53,700 over an 11-year term would cost a smoker of Jerry's age £54.75 per month from Scottish Provident.

Jerry has a Royal & Sun Alliance sickness and accident policy that he pays a monthly premium of £39 on. It will pay out a monthly benefit of £800 in the event of sickness or accident preventing him from working, after a deferred period of 15 days. The drawback with this type of policy is that the benefit is payable for a maximum period of 12 months and therefore does not provide Jerry with long-term protection.

Income protection or permanent health insurance would provide cover up to Jerry's retirement. Norwich Union will provide cover of £325 per month - 50 per cent of his gross earnings - for a monthly premium of £28.03 with a deferred period of 13 weeks, or £56.57 with a deferred period of four weeks. The policy would provide cover up to the age of 60.

Jerry could consider cancelling the sickness and accident policy to obtain the better coverage given by a permanent health insurance policy, with the savings largely defraying the costs.

A FEW MONTHS ago, we published a front-page story in this section to the effect that the Personal Investment Authority, the financial watchdog, was preparing (no more than that) to investigate sales of privately-provided top-up pensions.

The story came at the same time as a report by the specialist magazine, *Pensions Management*, showed that private pension top-ups, called FSAVCs, delivered far worse returns than those made available to employees from their own employers and known as AVCs.

After the article appeared, I was deluged by letters and phone calls from readers, telling me of their experiences when they sought to increase their future retirement income. All sorts of spurious reasons were given by their financial advisers as to why they should opt for FSAVCs in preference to AVCs. Strangely, the most important reason - that an adviser stands to make many hundreds of pounds in commission by selling an inappropriate product - was never among those reasons.

At the same time, I received a handful of "more in sorrow than in anger" letters from advisers themselves. Some put forward cogent reasons why they had, in some individual cases, recommended FSAVCs. A few preferred to operate on the basis that if you insult a journalist the problem of mis-selling will go away.

This week another report on FSAVCs lands on my desk. It is from Bacon & Woodrow, the highly-respected firm of independent actuaries. It makes worrying reading: on average, in-house AVCs outperform their private counterparts by 10 to 15 per cent over 10 years. This, as Bacon & Woodrow note, is the equivalent of more than one year's premiums.

The report comments: "We believe further research is needed in relation to FSAVC sales. This should include a review of the providers' files to establish the reasons for members taking out FSAVCs, where these are seen to be inappropriate." In other words, Bacon & Woodrow is itself

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CICUTTI

Fresh evidence
confirms that private
top-up pensions are
poor performers

calling for an investigation which financial regulators have dithered over for years, since the possibility of massive mis-selling was first aired.

Another useful suggestion is that any person considering a top-up should be provided with comparisons of investment options and charges between their company-provided AVC and the privately-sold FSAVC.

A SOLICITOR I know is being sued by a large mortgage lender. The lender, a former building society, wants compensation for the fact that one of its borrowers defaulted on his mortgage and walked off owing tens of thousands of pounds.

The solicitor is alleged to have made a tiny error in the conveyancing process, where he was acting on behalf of both lender and borrower - one which, it should be stressed, had no impact whatsoever on the default. The lender, of course, will accept no responsibility for its willingness to offer a dodgy prospect a 100 per cent mortgage during the early Nineties, when house prices were plummeting.

Similar stories form the background to a decision this week by the Law Society that its members should no longer act on behalf of both lenders and borrowers at the same time. This will make buying a house more costly. The next time mortgage lenders whinge about the housing recession, remember who is to blame.

ADVERTISING FEATURE

How thousands doubled their money with Prudential

Lump sum investors celebrate 99% growth over seven years

Most of us keep an eye open for ways to make our money work harder for us - but it's sometimes easy to miss the very thing we're looking for. Seven years ago, thousands of people spotted an investment opportunity that seemed like a good idea at the time. It was Prudential's Prudence Bond, which gave access to its With Profits Fund. With hindsight, their decision to invest has proved to be an even better idea.

Over the last seven years, these lump sum investors have seen their money virtually double, with returns of 99%. As the graph shows, this return is more than triple the amount that an average building society account would have delivered over the same period, which has got to be good news.

Prudential currently has another investment, Prudential Investment Bond, which invests in the same underlying fund - the Prudential With Profits Fund. So how does it work?

Most investors are aware that the stockmarket has historically offered much higher returns than bank or building society accounts over the medium to long-term. Prudential Investment Bond takes advantage of this growth

potential by pooling investors' money in the With Profits Fund, around 80% of which is invested in UK and overseas equities. The remainder is invested in property and fixed interest securities.

In addition to its ability to offer good growth potential, however, the stockmarket is also well-known for its ups and downs. Whilst Prudential is naturally keen to take advantage of the growth potential, it also wants to try to reduce the risks associated with stock-market investment.

To this end, Prudential has a bonus system which smooths out the peaks and troughs of the stockmarket while still providing the opportunity for growth. This system passes on the investment returns achieved by the fund managers to Prudential Investment Bond customers by means of bonuses.

As with all investments of this kind, however, please note that the With Profits Fund bonuses and therefore the future rate of growth cannot be guaranteed and past performance is not necessarily a guide to the future.

Of course, growth potential versus risk are not the only fac-

PRUDENTIAL Investment Bond

Stockmarket growth potential without all of the associated risks.

Lump sum investments from £3,000, currently with the option to top-up with £300 or more at any time.

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Regular income option available on balances of £2,000 or more: monthly, quarterly, six monthly or annually.

Complete or part withdrawals available

tors to take into account when choosing an investment. Flexibility is also important, which is why Prudential Investment Bond offers options to suit most people's requirements.

Lump sum investors, for instance, can currently invest from £3,000 upwards for themselves or £1,500 on behalf of a child. Those wishing to make regular savings, on the other hand, can currently save from £30 a month for adults or £20 a month on behalf of a child.

Having access to your investment is also an important consideration for most people. With Prudential Investment Bond, you can withdraw your money at any time, although Prudential generally advises lump sum investors to wait for at least five years, and regular savers to wait for 10 years or more. Lump sum investors with balances of at least £2,000 (currently) can choose to take a regular income on a monthly, quarterly, six monthly or annual basis if they wish, although obviously this may reduce the underlying capital.

When money is withdrawn at any time other than on a death or terminal illness claim, Prudential may make a Market

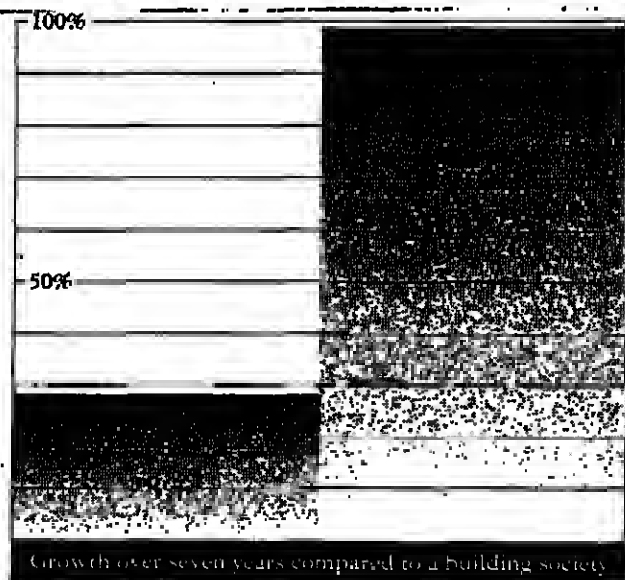
Value Reduction, which means reducing the amount paid out to reflect the current value of the underlying assets.

As a final point, when you're thinking of making a long-term investment you need a company with financial strength you can trust. With more than £119 billion under management and currently celebrating 150 years as a leading investment institution, it's hardly surprising that over 10 million people are happy to rely on Prudential.

Furthermore, Prudential's With Profits Fund - which underlies Prudential Investment Bond - is the largest With Profits Fund in the UK and worth more than £42 billion. It has also been in the top quartile of its competitors every year since 1991, as reported in the December 1997 issue of *Money Management*.

All in all, this seems like an investment well worth considering.

If you would like to find out more about Prudential Investment Bond and what it can do for you, please call 0800 000 000 quoting reference PIB 555.



*Source: Prudential, Prudence Bond assuming 10% allocation. P: initial charge, for £15,000 invested on 1st May 1991 and surrendered on 1st May 1998. *Source: Standard & Poor's Mortgage UK Savings £2,500 + net interest reinvested. 1st May 1991 - 1st May 1998. The UK Savings rate is based on rates derived from the 20 largest building societies and is calculated assuming a balance of at least £2,500 and at least seven days' notice. The figures shown are for a basic rate taxpayer. The returns would be different for those who are non-taxpayers or higher rate taxpayers. Building society accounts which give gross returns are available. Building society accounts are generally secure and readily accessible.

FREE INVESTMENT GUIDE



An Introduction to Investment will be yours with our compliments when you call for details of Prudential Investment Bond. Written by respected financial journalists Roger Anderson and Margaret Dibben, this independent guide explains the range of investments available, tax issues and how to achieve your financial ambitions.

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Actual performance of Prudential Investment Bond (originally known as Prudence Savings Account) cannot be shown as it has only been available since July 1994. The performance shown is for Prudence Bond which, while it invests in the same With Profits Fund, is not the same product as the Bond. Actual experience may differ between the two products due to different charges, allocation rates and bonus rates. The figures shown are for a basic rate taxpayer. There may be a liability for the difference between higher rate and basic rate income

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Soft on the skin and good in bed

Linen is a symbol of taste and luxury and its high maintenance makes it ideal for the caring connoisseur. By John Windsor

These days, hardly anybody sleeps in bed linen. Cotton – cheaper, more washable – has taken over to the extent that young people who refer loosely to “bed linen” do not generally know what they are talking about.

But at auction, the market for old linen – sheets, tablecloths, napkins – is picking up again after declining in the Eighties. That was the decade of tasteless, conspicuous consumption. The way to impress friends was to blow the City bonus on an expensive car, a flashy drinks cabinet or a dozen suits.

Nineties people are more interested in the proverbial “quality of life”. It is not only the appearance of things that count, but their touchy-feelness. Just fingering a linen sheet or tablecloth can come as a pleasant surprise after cotton. It is softer, has a closer weave than cotton and is warmer in winter and cooler in summer.

There is plenty of 19th- and early 20th-century linen for sale at Phillips’s auction of textiles next Tuesday. It tends to be cheaper and better quality than brand-new linen – and people are buying it as a luxury to use.



In the dim and dirty days, linen’s whiteness – like this sheet embroidered with flowers and foliage – carried iconic connotations of purity

Paul Burman

hand-washed then bleached on lawns in the open air is an experience that can never be recaptured.

Moreover, a trousseau, stored in an elaborate, carved wooden *armoire* (cupboard) and folded so as to exaggerate its size, remained the bride’s possession even in the event of widowhood or re-marriage.

From the 16th to the early 20th century in this country, and especially in Europe, girls would begin collecting their trousseaus from an early age – as early as

the first Communion in France, and even from birth in Turkey, where adult underwear for wedding-day was given to newborn girls and stored in a chest beside the cot.

In rural France, the towering *armoire* containing the bride’s linen still takes pride of place in the nuptial bedroom – and wives still remember to stack from the bottom, not the top, to ensure strict rotation.

Within living memory in Brittany, before a wedding, the *armoire* and trousseau would be carried to the groom’s house in a gaily

decked cart drawn by two festooned oxen. The bride’s mother would fill the *armoire* with linen, then the father of the bride would theatrically throw open its doors, to the appreciative gasps of guests, and make a speech. Then the priest would bless both *armoire* and marriage bed, and the two families would have dinner.

If you feel like getting into linen, the best place to start is the dining table cloth. These days, you may be thought eccentric if you put a white linen tablecloth on a polished

mahogany tabletop, instead of placemats. But stand your ground. The Victorians always covered the tabletop with a white linen tablecloth; that is why the tops of Victorian tables carry so little decorative inlay.

There is a “good linen table cloth” in Phillips sale with cutwork daisies and a floral crochet border, lotted together with two other plain ones, a tea cloth with hobnail lace edges, six linen tea napkins, 12 of cotton and three “various” tablecloths – estimated at £150-£200.

Some of the finest linen has elaborate damask – flatwoven – designs: spot damask by the shiny bits that appear matt on the other side. A 1920s dinner cloth of unbleached linen damask with chequer pattern, eight unused Irish linen damask table napkins with scrolling foliage design, two tray cloths and two hand towels, are estimated at £70-£100.

Modern linen fanciers can perform a service for mankind by abandoning the tradition of the rigid starched napkin.

The market for old linen is picking up again in the Nineties where people are more interested in the proverbial ‘quality of life’

They feel like sandpaper on the lips and encourage guests to hanker after cotton. And you will, of course, observe the etiquette of using table linen with a coloured monogram only at lunch, not dinner – that would never do.

To impress your house guests, put linen top sheets on their beds. Top sheets? They are almost forgotten. The top sheet is the one with decorative embroidery on the cuff – that’s the end that is turned down over the blankets, next to the pillow. In the sale, a top sheet finely embroidered with a pavilion by a lake, two swans and exotic flowers and foliage – together with a pair of matching pillowcases with finely hemstitched borders – is estimated at £400-£500. Less expensive, at an estimated £180-£220, is a pair of linen top sheets, matching pillowcases, five baby pillowcases and a lace boudoir cushion.

In the big shops, expect to pay £345 for a pair of Irish linen standard double sheets. A price tag of £570 for a pair of standard double-size is not unusual. At auction, for an equivalent pair of secondhand ones in perfect condition, you might pay £150-£200 – a touchy-feely price.

Textiles, Phillips, 101 New Bond Street, London W1, 29 September, 11am (0171-629 6602)

Where to stash your savings

You could do a lot better than simple deposit accounts. By Rachel Fixsen

HAVING MONEY to save is one thing. Knowing what to do with it is quite another. People in Britain have been hoarding like squirrels since the beginning of the Nineties, saving over 11 percent of disposable income, according to official figures.

Ask yourself two questions before deciding where to invest. Do you want to take a risk on your capital, and do you want to be able to get your hands on the money quickly? As a general rule, the more risk you are prepared to take and the longer you can tie your money up, the higher your return should be.

A first step out of building society accounts can be guaranteed growth or income bonds,” says Bryan Fisher, independent financial adviser at Berkeley Financial Planning, in Coventry.

Several companies offer guaranteed growth or income bonds. With GE Financial Assurance’s guaranteed income bonds, £5,000 invested

now for five years would give you 6 per cent net interest in the first year, according to data provider Moneyfacts. The rate is fixed in advance but is different for each of the five years, with 5 per cent for the final year.

Some types of guaranteed bond offer the chance to benefit from growth in stockmarket investments but save you from the risk of losing the capital you originally invested should the value of shares fall.

Building societies, as well as life insurance companies, offer guaranteed equity bonds. Bristol & West is currently offering a Guaranteed Equity Bond, which requires an investment of at least £500 for five years. At the end of the term, the bond pays 100 per cent of the average growth in the FTSE 100, S&P 500 and Nikkei 225, or return of the original investment.

If you are prepared to risk your capital in the pursuit of higher returns, unit trusts or unit trust FEPs could be a simple next step, says Janice Thomson

of Chelsea Financial Services.

A unit trust is just a fund or collection of shares of various companies. You buy part, or a unit, of that fund and benefit from a corresponding proportion of its growth. This means for a relatively small investment, your risk is spread across a large number of shares. Unit trust investments, up to a certain level, can be held as a PEP. “The big advantage of a PEP is that it is tax-free,” says Mrs Thomson. You can save as little as £500, or if you prefer a regular savings plan, there are providers who accept just £20 a month.

For novice investors, Mrs Thomson recommends corporate bond FEPs. Corporate bonds, like shares, are a type of security issued by companies. But corporate bonds are much safer because in the event of bankruptcy bondholders are repaid before shareholders. Aberdeen Profits’ Fixed Interest fund invests in corporate bonds. Over the last five years,

a £1,000 investment in this fund would have grown to £1,756.39, according to Moneyfacts.

However attractive returns may be elsewhere, if you do decide to play it safe and stick with a deposit account, shop around as rates vary widely.

Some of the best savings accounts recently have been offered by supermarket chains. Sainsbury’s Bank pays 6.75 per cent gross annual interest on its instant access savings account, while Safeway pays 4 per cent on balances of up to £500, but 7.4 per cent on balances of £2,500. Standard Life Bank has an account accessed by telephone, called Direct Access which pays 7.35 per cent interest on balances from £1.

Berkeley Financial Planning: 0800 214074; GE Financial Assurance: 0181 380 3388; Sainsbury’s Bank: 0500 405060; Safeway: 0800 995995; Standard Life Bank: 0345 335657; Chelsea Financial Services: 0171 351 6022

Your pension is in the oven

YOU MAY have heard about the Microwave Bank, a microwave oven that can manage your personal finances while defrosting your television dinner. Well almost. The microwave, which plugs into the Internet, is a concept developed by United States company NCR Corporation, and Knowledge Laboratory.

You cannot buy one. However, you can watch a demonstration on the web. The microwave has a touch-sensitive screen incorporated in its door. It may never make it to the shops in the high street but it is surely a harbinger of things to come.

There is no reason why Internet access needs to be managed through a PC and keyboard. The idea of surfing via the television will soon be realised through digital television. In fact, except for those who wish to bring work home, there may be little reason to have a home computer within the next couple of years. Web surfing, e-mail



INTERNET INVESTOR
ROBIN AMLÖT

publishers of *Vogue*, has one of the biggest web sites aimed at young professional women. The site explains how to make money work for you and how netPEP’s products can help.

Without wishing to cast aspersions on fellow “netizens” – an appalling American neologism coined to describe those who spend time on the Internet – I find the Microwave Bank and *Vogue*’s interest in personal finance on the Internet soothing to a condition I occasionally suffer from. It is known as “anoraksia nervosa” and the more accessible and inclusive the Internet becomes, the less I shall suffer from it!

Indeed, in a broad sense, personal financial planning is all about lifestyle choices and, perhaps, it is time more of us realized that. Which brings me to the latest in Internet banking – the unveiling of Citibank’s Internet Banking service.

Citibank’s latest offering allows you to pay bills online, set up standing

orders and transfer funds to other accounts. The service includes foreign currency accounts and the promise of Euro accounts from next January. You need a PC running Windows 95/98/NT or a Macintosh running Mac OS 8 or higher to access the Citibank service.

To be eligible for the Citibank service, you need a minimum household income of £30,000 a year. There is the promise of a year’s free access to the net via Virgin Net providing that you deposit £2,000 in the account for a month. But perhaps the best incentives are the low charges and the 4.75 per cent interest paid on current account balances.

Microwave Bank Demo: www.neustream.com/98-332.shtml
Vogue: www.condenast.co.uk
netPep: www.netpep.co.uk
Citibank Internet Banking: www.citibank.co.uk

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BEST BORROWING RATES

Telephone number	% Rate and period	Min. pay	Fee	Incentive
------------------	-------------------	----------	-----	-----------

MORTGAGES

FIXED RATES				
Northern Rock	0845 005 0500	4.95% to 1.1.01	95%	£485 No MIP for adv. up to £55k
Halifax	0800 214021	5.75% to 1.12.01	95%	£295 No MIP
Halifax	0800 101110	6.25% to 01.12.01	95%	£295 No MIP

VARIABLE DISCOUNTED RATES				
Prudential	0800 100077	4.95% to 1.1.01	95%	£295 No high lending fee
Northern Rock	0800 302014	6.45% to 5.01.01	95%	£295 No high lending fee
Coventry	0845 866822	6.35% to 30.03.01	95%	£295 No MIP for adv. up to £55k

FIRST TIME BUYERS FIXED RATES				
Halifax	0800 101110	4.95% to 01.12.01	95%	£195 No high lending fee (MIP)
Northern Rock	0845 005000	5.95% to 1.1.01	95%	£485 No MIP for adv. up to £55k
Coventry	0800 302014	6.15% to 5 years	95%	£295

FIRST TIME BUYERS VARIABLE DISCOUNTED RATES				
Coventry	0845 866822	4.35% to 30.03.01	95%	£295 No MIP for adv. up to £55k
Northern Rock	0800 302014	7.25% to 5 years	95%	£295

PERSONAL LOANS

UNSECURED				
Northern Rock	0845 005000	9.95% H	£185.14	£185.50
Prudential	0800 100077	9.95% H	£185.02	£185.81
Direct Line	0181 680999	12.95% A	£185.75	£185.35

SECURED LOANS (SECOND CHARGE)				
Northern Rock	0845 005000	9.95% H	£185.14	£185.50
Prudential	0800 100077	9.95% H	£185.02	£185.81
Direct Line	0181 680999	12.95% A	£185.75	£185.35

OVERDRAFTS				
Halifax	0800 101110	4.95% to 01.12.01	95%	£195 No high lending fee (MIP)
Northern Rock	0845 005000	5.95% to 1.1.01	95%	£485 No MIP for adv. up to £55k
Coventry	0800 302014	6.15% to 5 years	95%	£295

CREDIT CARDS				
Capital One Bank	0800 899000	Visa	0.95% H	£185.14
RBS Advanta	0800 777778	Visa	0.95% H	£185.50
Northern Rock	0800 302014	Visa	0.95% H	£185.81

GOLD CARDS				
Capital One Bank	0800 899000	Visa	0.95% H	£185.14
RBS Advanta	0800 777778	Visa	0.95% H	£185.50
Northern Rock	0800 302014	Visa	0.95% H	£185.81

STORE CARDS				
John Lewis	01244 681881	Visa	1.25% H	£185.14
John Lewis	01244 681881	Visa	1.25% H	£185.50
John Lewis	01244 681881	Visa	1.25% H	£185.81

OFFSHORE ACCOUNTS (gross)				
Delia's International	01594 811186	Capital One Direct	1.25% H	£185.14
Delia's International	01594 811186	Capital One Direct	1.25% H	£185.50
Delia's International	01594 811186	Capital One Direct	1.25% H	£185.81

NATIONAL SAVINGS ACCOUNTS (gross)				
Investment Accounts	1 Month	£20	5.00% H	£185.14
Investment Accounts	1 Month	£20	5.00% H	£185.50
Investment Accounts	1 Month	£20	5.00% H	£185.81

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Investment Accounts	1 Month	£20	5.00% H	£185.50
Investment Accounts	1 Month	£20	5.00% H	£185.81

BEST SAVINGS RATES

Telephone number	Account	Interest rate	Deposit	Min. pay	Incentive
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INSTANT ACCESS

Clydesdale Bank	0800 440000	Savings	Instant	£1	8.75% Day
Wendy	0800 222000	Current	Instant	£100	8.75% Year
Standard & Mercantile	0345 413855	Branch Interest	Instant	£100	8.00% Year
Leeds & Halifax	0900 222777	Payroll Account	Instant	£5,000	7.00% Year

INSTANT ACCESS POSTAL ACCOUNTS					
Northern Rock	0800 302014	Instant Access	Instant	£1	7.40% Year
Clydesdale Bank	0800 440000	Instant Access	Instant	£1	7.40% Year
Wendy	0800 222000	Instant Access	Instant	£100	7.40% Year
Standard & Mercantile	0345 413855	Instant Access	Instant	£100	7.40% Year
Leeds & Halifax	0900 222777	Instant Access	Instant	£5,000	7.40% Year

NOTICE ACCOUNTS & BONDS					
Royal Bank of Scotland	0800 899000	Instant Access	Instant	£1	7.40% Year
Standard Life Bank	0345 555555	Instant Access	Instant	£1	7.40% Year
Coventry	0800 302014	Instant Access	Instant	£1	7.40% Year
Legal & General Bank	0900 211000	Instant Access	Instant	£1	7.40% Year

CHEQUE ACCOUNTS					
Northern Rock	0845 005000	Instant Access	Instant	£1	7.40% Year
Wendy	0800 222000	Instant Access	Instant	£100	7.40% Year
Standard & Mercantile	0345 413855	Instant Access	Instant	£100	7.40% Year
Leeds & Halifax	0900 222777	Instant Access	Instant	£5,000	7.40% Year

FIXED RATE BONDS					
Standard Life Bank	0345 555555	Instant Access	Instant	£1	7.40% Year
Coventry	0800 302014	Instant Access	Instant	£1	7.40% Year
Legal & General Bank	0900 211000	Instant Access	Instant	£1	7.40% Year

FIRST TESSAS					
Northern Rock	0845 005000	Instant Access	Instant	£1	7.40% Year
Wendy	0800 222000	Instant Access	Instant	£100	7.40% Year
Standard & Mercantile	0345 413855	Instant Access	Instant	£100	7.40% Year
Leeds & Halifax	0900 222777	Instant Access	Instant	£5,000	7.40% Year

FOLLOW-ON TESSAS					
Northern Rock	0845 005000	Instant Access	Instant	£1	7.40% Year
Wendy	0800 222000	Instant Access	Instant	£100	7.40% Year
Standard & Mercantile	0345 413855	Instant Access	Instant	£100	7.40% Year
Leeds & Halifax	0900 222777	Instant Access	Instant	£5,000	7.40% Year

GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS (net)					
Northern Rock	0845 005000	Instant Access	Instant	£1	7.40% Year
Wendy	0800 222000	Instant Access	Instant	£100	7.40% Year
Standard & Mercantile	0345 413855	Instant Access	Instant	£100	7.40% Year
Leeds & Halifax	0900 222777	Instant Access	Instant	£5,000	7.40% Year

OFFSHORE ACCOUNTS (gross)					
Delia's International	01594 811186	Capital One Direct	1.25% H	£185.14	£185.50
Delia's International	01594 811186	Capital One Direct	1.25% H	£185.50	£185.81
Delia's International	01594 811186	Capital One Direct	1.25% H	£185.81	£186.12

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Delia's International	01594 811186	Capital One Direct	1.25% H	£185.81	£186.12

NATIONAL SAVINGS ACCOUNTS (gross)					
Investment Accounts	1 Month	£20	5.00% H	£185.14	£185.50
Investment Accounts	1 Month	£20	5.00% H	£185.50	£185.81
Investment Accounts	1 Month	£20	5.00% H	£185.81	£186.12

NO, I WASN'T on holiday last week. When markets move with the speed and perversity that we have seen recently, there are times when it is just too difficult to escape the attentions of the trading screen.

It is the likely direction of interest rates that presently motivates markets. Not long ago, we were anticipating a further rise in the cost of money as the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee attempted to head-off inflationary pressures. Now the market is factoring in a rate cut - probably by the end of the year - to compensate for the turmoil wrought by the emerging markets' crisis. A rate cut is also expected in the US.

There was an interesting comment in a recent market report. It referred to equity prices falling as a consequence of renewed strength in bonds. This does not sound like the usual received wisdom for markets. Normally, buoyant gilts encourage equity buying. Today they seem to be moving in different directions. Look at a chart of the reverse yield gap. It has fallen through the floor.

The attraction of bonds has been helped by the flight to quality given the turbulence in the markets of the Far East, Latin America and eastern Europe. But there is a fundamental reason for buying bonds as well.

If developed countries are to head-off a world recession, interest rates must come down, it is argued. In the US, a budgetary surplus is in prospect, so fewer bond issues are likely. Anyway, inflation is not a problem there. Indeed, another argument suggests that inflation is overstated in the developed world, particularly in the UK. If this is indeed the case, then interest rates are too high and bond yields might be expected to fall further.

What happens if action on interest rates is insufficient to prevent?



BRIAN TORAL

At a time of economic downturn, bonds might offer the best bet

collateral damage to North American and European economies in the wake of disruption elsewhere? You only have to look at Japan to see what might happen. Consumers aren't spending and savers are simply hoarding. In circumstances like these, it is all too easy to imagine prolonged periods when bonds and equities travel in different directions.

So the argument against bonds seems to rest with optimists who believe we will manage to stave off a recession in the West. Our little oasis of prosperity may not have much longer to run, though: companies are already delivering profit warnings and there seems little doubt that economic activity is now being hit.

If you do feel you have missed the boat in bonds, then there are plenty of alternatives giving higher returns, which may be valuable in a deflationary environment. Zero dividend preference stocks, for example, now yield fully 2 per cent more than gilts, whilst there are plenty of corporate bonds around giving attractive returns. I am an optimist by inclination, but think we are heading for a sharper economic downturn than markets are suggesting. In bonds I may have found that home for my pension fund money after all.

Brian Toral is chairman of the Greig Middleton strategy committee.

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Net prophets await profits

Time to meet the deadline



THE
JONATHAN DAVIS
COLUMN

Cyberspace is a world of rapidly changing fortunes and shifting alliances where few make money

The markets may have fallen into a state of high autumnal anxiety, but at least one upward trend in the UK investment scene shows, as yet, no sign of letting up. This is the rapid and exciting growth of users of the Internet as an investment medium.

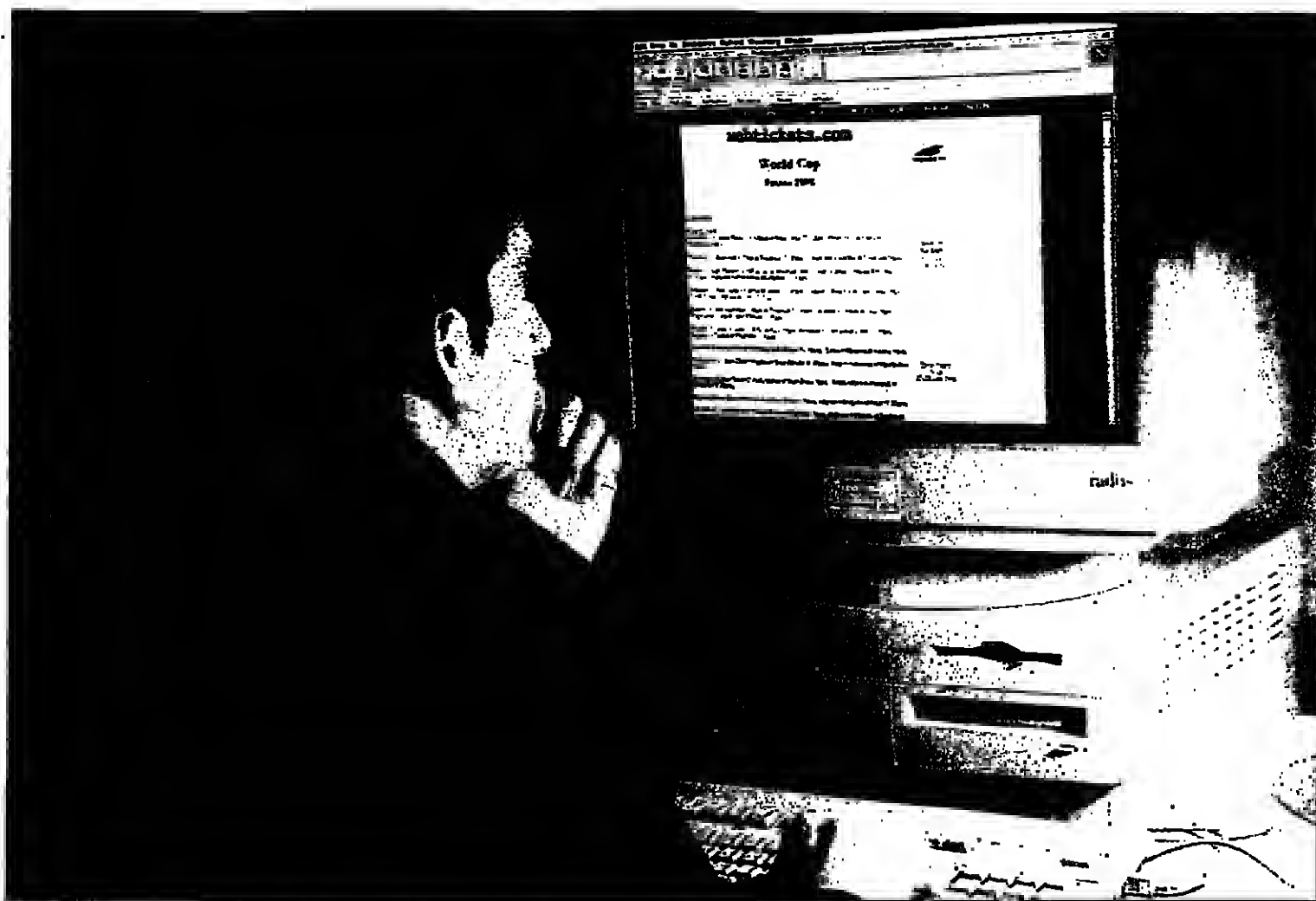
The hype says that cyberspace will soon become a leading channel in the distribution of financial information and products. I believe that it is now beginning to happen, and a lot of the hype has proved to be justified.

Nobody has ever doubted the potential of the Internet to make an impact in the sphere of investments. It is relatively easy to see how it has the capacity to create an effective marketplace, which links investors and providers of financial services in a uniquely convenient way.

But with its distinctive counter-cultural flavour, and the inevitably unstructured nature of its development, it seemed natural to express caution about how quickly it would be embraced by the ranks of mainstream investors and financial service companies. Which other medium would a company such as Scottish Widows willingly share space with Amsterdam sex shows and Matt Drudge, the man who regularly recycles the latest scabrous rumours on the peccadilloes of Washington politicians?

However, now that the Internet has started to become a respectable playground of the middle class, all that is changing fast. For investors, in particular, the Internet opens up such a wealth of valuable possibilities that its growth was always assured once word of its capabilities began to spread. It is no surprise that, in the US, the sophistication and breadth of Internet usage in this field is still way ahead of ours. But the gap is now starting to narrow here too.

This week, I talked to the man who now runs what is currently the largest independent UK investment site on the Internet. The site is called Interactive Investor (<http://www.ii.co.uk>). The aim of the site is to bring together a wide range of information and transaction tools across the spec-



Interactive Investor brings together a range of information and transaction tools across the spectrum of the financial markets

trum of the financial markets - everything from car and life insurance to pensions and the stock market.

Most of the leading Internet service providers - the AOLs and CompuServes of this world - are attempting to do the same thing with their dedicated "gateway" sites, as are big information companies such as the Financial Times, Reuters and Bloomberg. Just to confuse things, many of these companies also are bedding their bets by supplying packaged products to other providers.

All the big unit-trust firms and banks have their own sites and are looking for the best way to access the growing band of Internet consumers.

It is a complex and fluid market, but Interactive Investor is proving one of the most durable and successful competitors. The man who runs it is an engaging Englishman with an MBA from Harvard Business School called Alex Heath. He took on the job last year, with the task of turning what was a powerful concept - first started in 1995 by a Canadian entrepreneur - into a successful commercial business.

As the chart shows, the growth in popularity of the site has accelerated rapidly since its launch in 1995. Since the start of last year, in fact, the number of registered users has grown from about 10,000 to just less than 96,000.

The number of "hits" - a measure of how intensively used the site has

been - has grown from a million a month, a year ago, to more than 15 million a month today. Given that this is only one site, albeit one of the most popular, these are remarkable figures.

They underline how enthusiastically - after the slow start - that both users and financial companies are now embracing the new medium. What Interactive Investor and others are tapping into now is something more than just business dabbling in a faddy new

field. Intriguingly, the Internet is starting to prove its real worth not just as a channel of communication and information, but increasingly as a medium for sales. As Alex Heath points out, whereas initially investors used the Internet to research investment decisions, more and more are now moving on to carry out transactions as well.

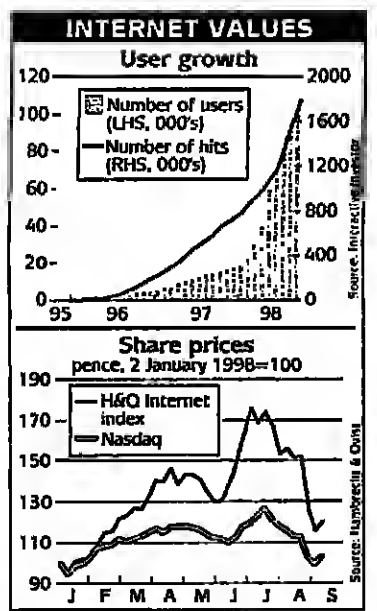
In addition, about a third of the site's 100,000 registered users, according to Heath, actively monitor the value of their holdings, using Interactive Investor's portfolio management service. This is a powerful tool which automatically updates the values of each share you own from its market data feeds. To keep this in perspective, some of these portfolios appear to consist of shadow transactions, rather than real life buy and sell decisions, but the trend is clear enough.

Given that this can be done for no more than the cost of a subscription to an Internet service provider, and the related local-rate phone calls, the success of sites such as Interactive Investor is perhaps not that surprising. What is still remarkable is how far and how rapidly usage is growing. If current market research projections are correct, then Internet access in the UK is set to double from 10 million to 20 million households by the early part of the next century. Financial services will be one of the major beneficiaries of this growth.

It is true that the Internet is still largely a field of dreams for wannabe entrepreneurs. Cyberspace is a strange place to do business - it is a world of rapidly changing fortunes and shifting competitive alliances - and very few, if any, participants have yet made money out of it. Interactive Investor is no exception, but its business is moving forward.

Advertisers like it as a medium, not only because it has a high conversion rate - those who see an advertisement are more likely to make a transaction than in many other mediums - but also because the feedback from users is easy to log and analyse.

Interactive Investor has the advantage of being a small firm with the Internet as its only business, which is competing against larger competitors who cannot decide if the Internet is a threat or an entirely new market. Of course, any sustained slowdown in world stock markets may slow down the rate of growth in investor interest in this new medium. As the second chart shows, shares in American companies with Internet interests have already taken a pasting since the market started to wobble badly in July. But as a regular user of Interactive Investor and many other online services, my guess is that the momentum behind the growth in current demand is largely unstoppable. Once tried, it is hard to conceive of life without it.



The Inland Revenue can help you file your returns. By Rachel Fixsen

BITE THE bullet, blow the dust off your calculator and fill in your tax return. That is, if you haven't done so already and want the Inland Revenue to calculate your tax for you. If so, your return must reach your tax office by Wednesday 30 September.

Having the sums done for you is not the only advantage in getting your return in promptly. Employees who have underpaid tax by up to £1,000 can have that tax collected through their PAYE code for the next complete tax year as long as they meet the September deadline. If not, the full amount has to be paid at the end of next January.

Even if you do not manage to get your return in by the end of this month, the Revenue says it will still try to work out how much tax you owe or are owed. But they cannot guarantee they will do this before 31 January - the final date for tax returns to be in and any tax owing to be paid. Failure to meet that deadline means an automatic £100 fine.

So if you miss this month's deadline and do not intend to do your own calculations, try to overestimate the tax you owe and pay that amount by the end of January. Any overpayment will be reimbursed.

So far, 2.8 million of the 8.9 million people who were sent a self-assessment tax return have completed them - slightly more than at this stage last year, says Jane Ashton of the Inland Revenue.

If you are happy to calculate

your own tax, you have some breathing space. And, according to the Revenue, doing it yourself is not too difficult. "You copy figures from the tax return on to the tax calculation guide and add them up," says Ashton. "I would say it is very simple."

During the week, you can get help over the phone from your local tax office, whose number is on the front page of your tax return. Outside office hours there is also a helpline for any self-assessment queries.

Is it really important to meet the September deadline? It is, unless you want to do the sums yourself, says Steve Midwinter, partner at the accountants, Deloitte & Touche. "I think calculating your own tax is very difficult for a normal person. The tax affairs of anyone obliged to complete a self-assessment return will be more complicated than average."

The best way to find a good tax adviser is through personal recommendation. Failing that, call one of the professional bodies. How much they charge varies enormously. For advice as well as completing a return you could expect fees of at least £100 to £200, while those with assets could get a bill for thousands of pounds.

Inland Revenue helpline: 0645 000444; **The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales:** 0171-920 8682; **The Chartered Institute of Taxation:** 0171-235 9381; **The Tax Team:** 0800 393520; **Deloitte & Touche:** 0171-936 3000

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It still pays to think global

Despite recent market reversals, shrewd investors will maintain an international flavour to their portfolios. By Tony Lyons

Unit holders with investments in a number of unit trusts with large holdings in Malaysia, including Fidelity ASEAN, HSBC Singapore & Malaysia and Tiger Index funds, have been shocked by the temporary suspension of dealing. This has left them unable to buy and, more importantly, sell their units. The funds together with Autof, the trade association, and Imro, the investment watchdog, are trying to find a way that dealings in the funds can re-start.

The problem has been caused by the imposition of currency and capital controls in that country which has left fund managers with holdings in Malaysia unable to repatriate any of their money back to the UK before September next year at the earliest.

This and the state of world stock markets over the last couple of months has brought home the reason why investment funds carry a health warning that prices can go down as well as up. From the July peaks in most of the developed world's markets in Europe and America, share prices have tumbled by around 20 per cent.

The turbulence that began in global markets started in the Far

East in the summer last year. Having calmed down, the decline in the Asian tigers turned into a contagion this spring. It then spread to other emerging markets, including those in Latin America and Europe, especially Russia, and stopped the raging bull market in the US and Europe in its tracks.

And it is not over yet. Events in Japan, where the government has still to pull its economy into shape, has increased volatility. Nervousness among investors has been further heightened by fears of a devaluation by the Chinese authorities of its currency, the yuan, the possibility that an international trade war may break out and that some countries may impose currency and stock market controls, and that the Group of Seven, the world's leading industrial nations, may not get its act together in time to stop a possible recession developing into a global economic depression.

In the light of this, should we still consider investing internationally? The answer to that is, yes. Despite all the fears and the recent market falls, the reasons for investing in an international portfolio remain as convincing as ever.

While putting money into UK companies is normally the first equity investment for most savers,



Political turmoil in Malaysia has been fuelled by growing economic uncertainty Vincent Thian

after this, they are usually advised to go international. This is because economies around the world are normally at different stages of the economic cycle.

This means that prospects can be better elsewhere. Despite the recent falls, mainland European markets that are busy getting ready for the introduction of the euro currency in 1999, have been among the best

performers on the international scene this year and most are still showing worthwhile gains since January.

But investing overseas can be a costly and time consuming exercise. Some markets are difficult to invest in. It is expensive to buy foreign shares and there is the added problem of taking currency risks. Even more important, it can be very dif-

ficult to get up to date information on foreign companies.

Luckily, there are plenty of unit and investment trusts that specialise in international investments. They offer ready made portfolios that can be bought into quite cheaply. These funds take all the hassle out of global investing.

One of the best means of investing internationally is by regular

saving. By putting in a set amount each month, you will iron out the peaks and troughs seen in markets. It means that when prices fall, you will buy more units or investment trust shares for your money. All the main fund management groups now offer special regular saving plans, some starting from as low as £35 a month.

But whether you are considering a lump sum or regular savings, you should take a five or ten-year view.

Be very selective and be wary of any funds with holdings in the emerging markets

Then you can ignore temporary setbacks, such as we are seeing at the moment. Past investment history shows us that over such a period, equity investment usually outstrips any other form of savings.

Going international can suit the cautious investors. By spreading your money in different economies, you will benefit from the fact that while some may be in decline, others will be on the way up.

"Be very selective and check that the funds that you are interested in are investing in the key developed markets. Be very wary of any that have holdings in the emerging markets," advises Graham Bates, a Leeds-based IFA.

This is backed up by Roddy Kohn,

of Kohn Cougar, who says: "Do not be afraid of international investment. Most of the damage in the markets has already been done."

"However, do look at the underlying portfolios. Good managers will have invested in the larger international blue chips, such as Coca Cola, Shell and Glaxo. These will stand the test of time."

General international unit trusts on offer from all the major groups are the least risky. Most have anything up to half their investments in the US, with the rest spread around the world.

International investment trusts could suit those prepared to take a higher risk. Their share prices have fallen faster than their net asset values over the past couple of months, which means that they can be bought on large discounts. Because of this, it is currently possible to buy £1 worth of assets for around 82p. Over the long term, general international trusts such as Alliance, Foreign & Colonial and Witan have produced very good returns for their shareholders. But do be cautious as prices and discounts may have further to fall. Most of the leading investment trusts, like unit trusts, have regular savings plans, starting from as little as £25 a month.

Risks are much higher with sector, country or region specific funds. Some emerging market funds, for example, have lost over 50 per cent or more of their value over the past two years. So while in the long term these could show sizeable gains, in present market conditions they are really only for the hardened gamblers.

Land of the falling sun

Plummeting share prices are far more devastating to Japan than the West. By Richard Shackleton

THINK BACK to those carefree days of December 1989. With the 1987 stock market crash a distant memory, investors in Japanese equities were looking forward to another year of steady rises. The benchmark Nikkei-225 had just hit an all-time peak of 38,915, and many analysts were predicting 50,000.

Nine years on the Nikkei has fallen by nearly two thirds. Worse still, the second- and third-line stocks have seen their value collapse by 72 and 83 per cent respectively.

For a country which hadn't experienced recession since before the Korean War, falling share prices have proved far more damaging than in Europe and North America, where the relationship between stock market and "real" economic performance is less opaque.

In Japan, share values have far more significance for the

financial system. Most big companies have large trade investments in other quoted companies. Analysts at Daiwa Securities expect losses on share dealings to overwhelm half-year profits of groups such as Shiseido, Nippon Steel, Nissan and Marubeni.

Falling share prices have created a vicious circle in which the impact of past falls on bank balance sheets and corporate profits pushes shares down even further. Hardly surprising, then, that investors are prone to clutch at any straws that are proffered, such as the recent cut in the Bank of Japan's overnight lending rate to a record low of just 0.25 per cent.

But economists such as WestLB's Sanjit Maitra believe that too much downward pressure on interest rates presents other problems. "The Bank of

Japan is desperate to avoid another yen crisis and would not do anything that would undermine its support for the currency," he says.

However, many fund managers are pinning their hopes on the recently installed government of prime minister Keizo Obuchi. It has pledged to restore faith in the banking system, stop the slide in credit and stimulate the world's second-biggest economy. In part, it has used direct intervention in the stock market to raise the level of the Nikkei to its level of six months ago, some 16,500.

But for investors looking to ride on the government's coat-tails, the omens aren't exactly promising. If the government stopped intervening now, this would be to invite further big falls - scarcely the sort of background needed for successful investment.

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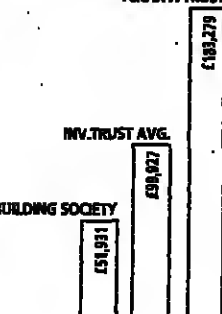
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Rich pickings in Europe

Anyone looking to buy equities now should plump for the countries joining EMU. By Tony Lyons

Despite the current turbulence in world stock markets, when it comes to equity investment, most fund managers and independent advisers reckon that Europe is the place to be. And this is despite the tremendous rises most of the leading Continental bourses and stock exchanges have seen over the past few years.

"There are very strong arguments that because of the long-term growth we expect to see, Europe is where to be over the coming years," says Graham Bates, a Leeds-based independent financial adviser.

In spite of some dramatic falls in share prices since mid-July, when the main stock markets peaked, many are still showing gains of over 10 per cent this year. The tables, which show how the prices of the top performing European specialist unit trusts have risen with net income reinvested, show how well most funds had performed up to the beginning of the month.

No investment trusts have been included as they have suffered worse than their unit trust competitors in the recent downturn.

Because investment trusts borrow money to invest, called gearing, they have been among the worst sufferers during the current shakeout. Up to mid July, the European specialists were doing well. Discounts, the difference between the share price and the underlying net asset value of the fund, were narrowing.

Following the onset of the Russian economic crisis, the sector has suffered dramatically. The £1.1bn Mercury European Privatisation Trust, for example, over the past couple of months has seen its net asset value fall by 23 per cent while its share price has dropped some 26 per cent. This means that its discount has suddenly widened from around 13 to 18 per cent. Other investment trusts have followed the same path.

So why, despite these falls, are fund managers so gung-ho about Europe. The significance of the impact of the euro among the 11 European Union countries that will be embracing the new currency when it comes into being next year will be dramatic. For the financial world the advent of European Monetary Union (EMU) heralds an era of low inflation in a single market of 250 million plus, large enough to rival the United States.

"On top of this," says Vicky Hastings who looks after the Mercury



fund's investments, "Europe has discovered equities."

In the past, most large mainland European companies were run as private fiefdoms. If they wanted to expand, they borrowed money from the banks. There were also cosy cross-holding arrangements with the investment banks. Now this has changed dramatically. Companies have found it easier and cheaper

to raise equity capital to fund their investments.

At the same time, European investors discovered equities. They found that the potential returns they could get were better than with fixed interest. Pension funds also were finding that to finance future retirement benefits, they had to follow the British example, and invest their money. They could no longer expect

a declining working population to fund an ever increasing number of retired pensioners, so this meant they had to find ways of making their funds grow - in other words, investing in stocks and shares.

The growth of state privatisations in Europe, especially when it comes to state-owned telecoms, financial and industrial conglomerates, is continuing. In the UK more than any

where, we all know the potential gains that these offer. Not only does this revitalise the companies, it usually provides instant capital gains to investors. So European companies have discovered shareholder value. Business leaders are now aware that an investor expects a decent return on his or her money, and this they have been delivering.

What makes a good European fund? Preferably, this should be one with little or no holdings in any of the emerging markets such as Russia. Instead it should concentrate on the main markets, especially those of countries already in the EU. It should also focus on those companies that are likely to grow fastest.

"We look for companies that occupy strong, leading positions in sectors that can buck national economic cycles," says Rory Powe, who heads Invesco's European funds, the top long-term performers.

European companies have discovered shareholder value and are now aware that investors expect a decent return on their money

"We particularly favour telecoms, healthcare and applied business software companies. We look to businesses that have market dominance and are fast growing, and don't buy just anything. Service sector companies are preferred, so manufacturers are given a low weighting as they are at a competitive disadvantage because of the high cost of labour and social benefits in Europe."

While it may be difficult to make money from equities in the short term, as stock markets still show no sign of recovering, anyone looking to Europe must take a medium to long term view, say five years or more. If you do, "this could prove to be a good buying opportunity," says Bristol-based independent adviser Roddy Kohn. "As well as the general attractions, you can also expect a decline in the current strength of sterling. The pound could fall in value, which would add to the gains made from any investment now."

Capitalising in Brazil

Will the crisis cause a domino effect in Latin America? By Brian King

INVESTORS HOPING to capitalise on the sharp falls in Latin American stock markets should linger on the sidelines as Brazil's debt crisis could lead to further falls, experts warn. "It's impossible to say if Brazil can survive the crisis - we're dealing with investor sentiment at the moment," says Michael Hughes, a director of Fleming Asset Management.

Brazil has experienced a flight of capital at a rate of \$1.5bn a day, and has only \$50bn left in foreign exchange reserves, Mr Hughes said. If high interest rates - now 49.75 per cent - fail to stem the outflow from investors increasingly averse to emerging-market risk, it may be forced to devalue the nation's currency, impose capital controls or default on its short-term debt.

The flip side to this dire scenario is that a substantial International Monetary Fund/United States bailout package emerges to bolster investor confidence, Mr Hughes said. This could stay in place until after the October 4 elections, when President Sernano Henrique Cardoso, if re-elected, could more easily introduce public spending cuts to reduce the budget deficit of 7 per cent.

"It's not unreasonable that the US will help out. People are beginning to realise that Brazil is the ninth biggest economy in the world, and that 20 per cent of US exports go to Latin America. A big blow to Latin America would hurt the US too. But can Brazil hold out? The long-term prospects depend on the short term. If it can survive this crisis, the long-term prospects for the region are good."

James Montier, global strategist at merchant bank BT Alex Brown, says: "I wouldn't look at Latin America for at least six months. Markets must first discount the possibility of a global recession."

Taking a long-term view of Latin America is not sensible, Mr Montier says. "Emerging markets, contrary to the great belief among investors, are relatively inefficient investments on a passive, long-term view basis. They're best played over shorter periods," he said.

Recent investment returns from Latin America seem to support this view. In 1997, Latin markets delivered positive returns of 31.2 per cent to UK investors despite last summer's financial turmoil in Asia. So far this year, markets have fallen by as much as 55.7 per cent.

John Ross, global equity strategist at Fidelity Investments, also is cautious about Latin America's short-term prospects. "We don't know what the IMF and the US will do. Brazil's privatisation programme alone is not enough to meet its debt requirements, and increasing interest rates has raised the costs of servicing government debt. If the Brazilian real devalues, the Argentine peso will fall further."

Mr Ross is more optimistic about the region in the long term. "Some of the bad news is already reflected in share prices, so maybe we're closer to the bottom than people think. Given where markets and share valuations are, Latin American markets should provide positive returns over the next five years," he says.

That could be good news for UK bargain hunters but only once the region turns the corner. Shares in Latin America investment trusts are now 29.95 per cent below net asset value - with discounts having widened to a record worst of 44 per cent earlier this month.

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A smart move with a timeless woollen classic

Rose Rainey left London's fashion world to find success designing cardigans in Shropshire.
By Charlotte Packer

The cardigan is one of fashion's great perennials. Obviously, there are versions of the versatile knitted jacket which are more or less fashionable than others (and the same can also be said of the manner in which it is worn).

But, in essence, the cardigan changes very little from season to season, year to year: it's knitted, has buttons, and is either long or short, with a round or a v-neck.

This year the cardigan is more popular than ever, and everyone from Voyage (velvet-trimmed and very expensive), to Benetton (comes in every colour under the sun) is doing them. But, of all the styles and labels available on the high street and beyond, it is Rose Rainey's For Smart Walks hand-knitted 1940s throwback, that the cardigan cognoscenti want.

The Smart Walks cardigan is simple, and very flattering: slightly nipped-in at the waist, it is ribbed with slim sleeves, subtly defined shoulders and comes in almost any colour you want with a contrasting panel around the neck and edges. "Because it's ribbed, it suits any shape," explains Rainey.

"There is only one size and this fits anyone from an 8 to a 14. Obviously, I can make them bigger if people want, but ribbed wool is so springy it just seems to mould around people." One customer, concerned about size, confided to Rainey that she had "a huge bosom". Rainey told her not to worry. "I said, 'All you need is a nice black bra and you'll look fantastic'. She ordered two!"

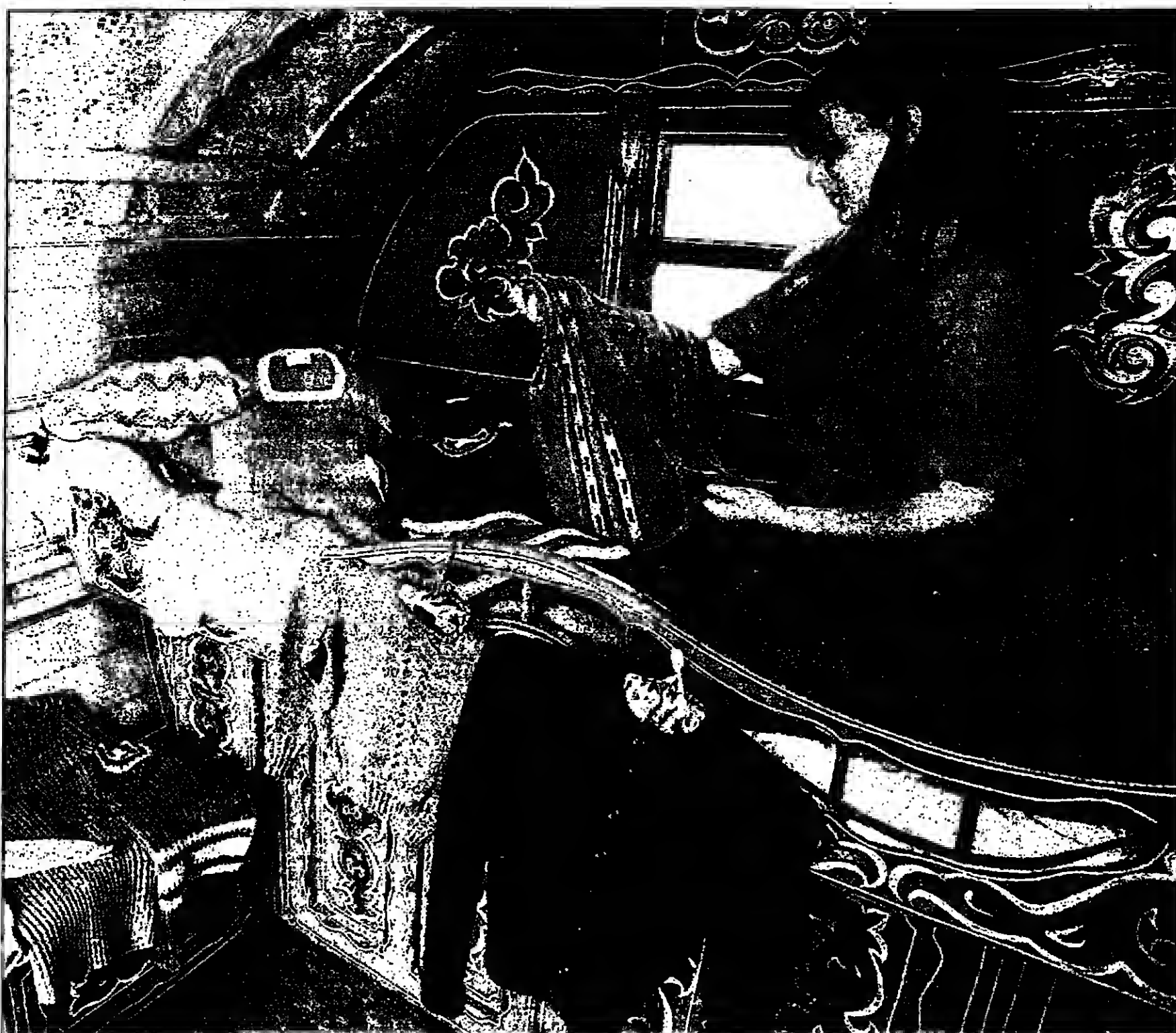
Although only launched eight months ago at a party in a friend's flat, interest in Rainey's designs has been such that she's now brought out a mail order catalogue. Customers such as Jade Jagger and Courtney Love are happy waiting up to a month to get their hands on their very own Rose Rainey.

"People don't seem to mind. I pack everything up myself - in a smart box with tissue - and I think sometimes people forget it's on its way and then they get a lovely surprise when it arrives in the post."

The success of Rainey's fledgling business is not surprising when you see the cardigans (each one is unique: beautifully made by hand in 100 per cent pure new wool, with incredible attention to detail and costs between £75 and £85), but does seem nothing short of miraculous when you discover that soon after the launch she took to the road in a horse-drawn gypsy caravan with her partner Brad and their son Tyso.

"It was quite hard running the business from the road," she admits. "We'd have to stop at phone boxes so I could ring home, pick up orders, then call through to the knitters and finally phone the clients to confirm everything. In the end, we sold another cart we had and bought a laptop to help keep track of things."

Their current wagon, with its wonderfully gaudy gold, pink and red interior and tiny wood-burning stove is their second of the season. "We set off in April and travelled from Shropshire, covering around 10 miles a day. And in Gloucestershire we ended up selling the



Rose Rainey, above, displaying some of her cardigan designs, inspired by the horse-drawn caravan, left, that she travelled in with her partner and son Mike Scott



wagon. We'd made camp in someone's orchard and a passer-by fell in love with it."

Wagon number two, which was built in 1909, is apparently much better. It's bigger - although it feels minute - with more storage space. At the moment, it is settled under an old oak tree outside Rainey's mother's house in Shropshire, while the couple look for a more permanent home.

But even though the business now demands a larger base, they won't give up life on the road altogether. After all, it was a caravan journey that brought about Rainey's career change from fashion stylist to knitwear designer.

Having spent a summer on the road with Brad, she decided it was time to leave London and return to Shropshire. "I'd been working as a fashion stylist for

magazines such as *i-D* and *The Face*, and I realised I'd grown tired of the fashion scene. I felt that having grown up in the country, I'd like to return to the country." The big question was how.

"Brad would be fine because he makes wagons, but I knew I had to find something that I could do out here." Knitwear, although Rainey can't knit, was the answer.

"I found all these wonderful old 1940s knitting patterns and I thought it would be nice to do something with them." A life-long love of clothes, and jumpers in particular, made the idea of producing her own range of designs particularly appealing. "I bought lots of wool and advertised for knitters," she says, "and all these lovely ladies responded."

"Because I can't knit, and I don't know any of the 'language', I found it really exciting when I saw that I could come up with designs, and that it was possible to find knitters who would create them from my drawings. Now, when I'm travelling, I lie and dream of cardigans." The caravan seems to be a rich source of inspiration. A range of brightly coloured striped jumpers, called *Stripy Sensation*, owe their palette to the caravan's exotic interior.

All Rainey's knitters are local, and many have grandchildren who've grown "far too cool" to want anything knitted for them by their grandmothers. "They had no one to knit for, so they were really glad to have a reason to knit! They've also got lots of ideas, and every now and then I get these surprise packages from them."

She no longer pays any attention to fashion, she says. "I'm interested in producing timeless, quality designs. I like the idea of my cardigans becoming old friends, that they are delicious to put on and will last forever." To concern herself too much with the swings and roundabouts of a seasonal collection would be to sell herself and her customers short.

"I found it rather a relief to get away from the whole fashion scene. I do think there are designers who create brilliant things, people like Galliano and so on. But the whole life that goes with it, all that backstage catfiness and competitive spirit, can take away from the beauty of the clothes."

Instead of the catwalk, it is Rainey's clients who provide the inspiration. "Seeing people in my clothes at the show I had was great. The body warmth breathed life into them! Also customers call and ask for different collars, or perhaps larger pockets, and all of this gives me ideas."

Rainey will soon be showing two new lines which came directly from customer requests. One is the men's version of the Smart Walks cardigan, which her cousin pleaded with her to produce, and the other is a Fair Isle collection.

"A woman asked if I could make Fair Isle sweaters for her five children, and so I looked into it. And while researching patterns in vintage magazines, I came across an old ad for a wool company and I've found that they're still going strong, so they are going to supply the wool."

Although customers choose from a list of styles and colours, details such as buttons are decided by Rainey. "I love buttons and I've got jars and jars of them which I've collected from markets and haberdashers. If someone says they want something sparkly, I'll see what I can find, but usually it's a surprise when the cardigan arrives."

One lucky customer ordered a cardigan at the first show, and her friend later mentioned her passion for roses to Rainey who made a point of tracking down some pretty rose buttons. "She was so delighted she ordered another one for her daughter."

Rainey is currently planning another show, the date of which she has yet to be confirmed, and at this she will launch her Cat Hais (fabulous Mrs Mop-style knitted head scarves with pointy ears), the male version of the Smart Walks cardigan and a knitted dressing gown which she describes as the "wedding dress" of the show.

In the meantime the catalogue is doing well and the Smart Walks Cardigan remains as popular as ever. As Rainey says: "They are timeless: people can choose their own colours and stamp each design with their own identity."

Rose Rainey can be contacted on: 01891 680 447. Women's cardigans are from £75 to £85; children's knitwear is available from £20 to £35; men's sweaters start at £55. Bradford Steer makes traditional wagons to order, and can be contacted on the same number.

SIX OF THE BEST

BED LINEN SPRAYS



Mio Essential Fragrances fine linen mist, £15.95. Mio, available at Liberty (0171-734 1234)



Deep rest/sleep water mist, £14.50. Crabtree & Evelyn (01235 862 244 for mail order)



Madagascar Aroma Mist, £14.50. Aveda (0171-410 1600 for mail order)



Lavender water, £8.95. L'Occitane (0171-290 1426)

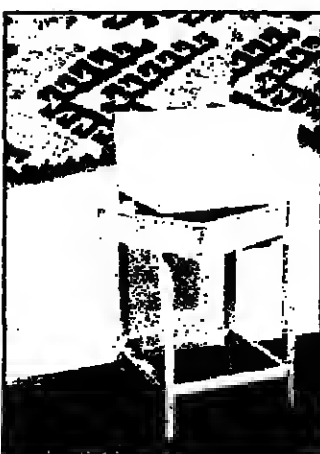


Aqua Di Limone linen spray, £26. Jo Malone (0171-501 0033), a blend of fresh citrus and sandalwood



Fresh Air supergreen fine linen mist, from Mio

SHOP TALK



ANDREW MARTIN, the home accessory company, has recently added a new mail-order division - Andrew Martin Direct - to its furnishings and fabrics empire. The swanky new Bed and Bath collection is the cornerstone of the latest catalogue, all reasonably priced decoration for sophisticated homes. However, if you can't wait for the post, then nip down to the Andrew Martin shop in Walton Street, in London's Knightsbridge. The Bed and Bath Collection is available from Andrew Martin Direct on 0800 328 1346

TIM STERN

GOOD THING



IF YOU find that your skin dries out quickly after being moisturised no matter how much lotion you ladle on, the new Skin Confidence range from E45 could be just the thing to keep your skin soft. The new range includes body lotion, hand and nail cream and shower cream, all with enough vitamins and lipids to keep your skin nourished for a whole 24 hours; stock up now to be ready for the winter months ahead. The range is available in all major chemists and stores

EVE GEE

MAD THING



Planning a trip to outer space? Preparing to mount an underwater expedition or a descent into a volcano? Don't leave home without a Fisher Space Pen. A mere £15.95 will buy a pen which cost NASA \$1m to develop. The Space Pen, available in shiny chrome or matt black, will write in any position, even upwards, under water, in heat up to 200°C and in a gravity-free void. Available from pen shops or from City Organiser, Cabot Place West, Canary Wharf, London E14.

I WANT TO OWN... A WIDESCREEN PLASMA TELEVISION SET

Small perfectly formed screen

Plasma is a fantastic word. It is more than just the essence of our life-blood; it comes wrapped in plastic and is drip-fed into you. It is a comforting word, evoking warm images of men and women wearing green coats and face masks using their advanced scientific knowledge to play God for the benefit of humanity.

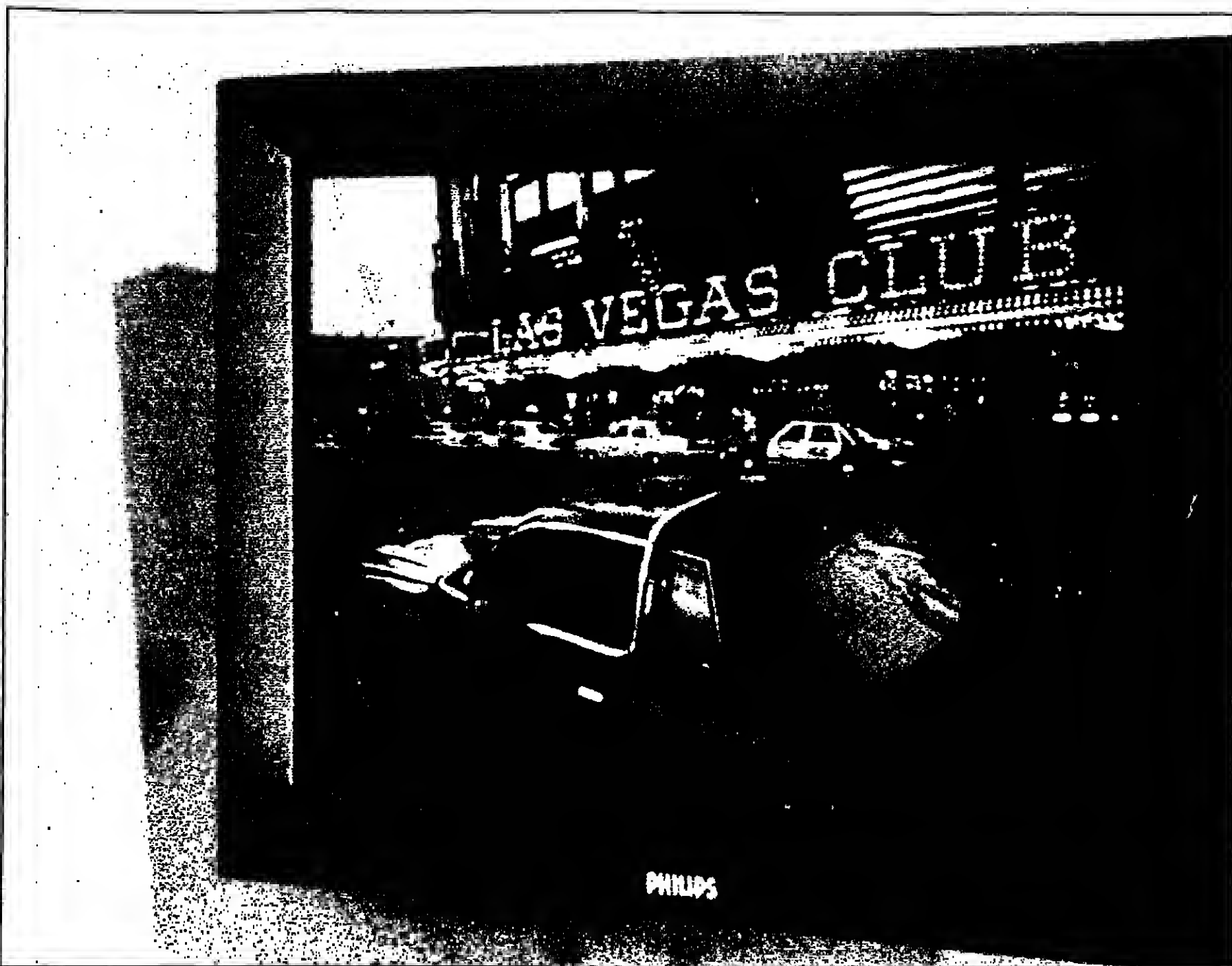
However, the word has another existence outside medicine – for plasma is also the name given to a translucent quartz gemstone that glows green when torchlight is played around underground caverns. And in the white-coated world of physics, plasma is referred to as the fourth state of matter, being the hot ionized material present in the sun, in most stars and in fusion reactors.

It is by creating such super-heated gas from the discharge of an electric current that television designers have come up with a method of making 42-inch wide, 10cm-deep televisions that you can literally hang like a painting on your living room wall (using very strong hooks – some weigh over 40kg).

As well as their unobtrusive depth, most plasma televisions are widescreen, like cinema screens – the standard which all TV programmes will adopt by the start of the next century – and they are compatible with PCs and Macs and most broadcasting systems (although televisions incorporating integrated digital satellite technology are not yet on the market).

The technology brings those old futurist fantasies of screens the size of rooms one step nearer reality. After colour television, remote control units and VCRs, this could be television's next great leap forwards – although it is arguable that the backdoor manner by which digital TV is likely to make satellite TV ubiquitous in the UK may prove more culturally significant. Nevertheless, it is the product's name as much as its importance or attributes that makes plasma television so enthralling. For my money, whoever came up with the idea of sticking the two words together is a marketing genius.

And my money would have to amount to between £8,220 and £12,500 for one of the six plasma TVs currently on the market. Or rather nearly on the market. This hardware



It's not a telly, it's a work of art... the ultra-modern plasma television – exemplified by this Philips 42PW9902 – can literally be hung like a painting on your living-room wall

is hard to find. *Home Entertainment*, one of a clutch of magazines dedicated to television and home cinema, bemoaned the logistical impossibility of getting them all in one place at the same time in order to compare them.

And even the upmarket shops dedicated to selling televisions offered only suspicious looks and the excuse that they had a prototype for display purposes but were now having to wait "about a month" for the real thing.

And one empty-handed salesman, who proudly showed off Bang & Olufsen's admittedly classy revolving 32-inch widescreen Beo-Vision Avant (with requisite Dolby Surround Pro Logic sound and 100Hz technology – yours with a pair of pencil-thin organ-shaped speakers for £7,050) like it was his first child, dismissed current plasma TV technology out of hand.

"If you're determined to buy a plasma TV, then hold fire," he advised. "An American company is already working on a model that will make the current ones obsolete."

That's normally the kind of remark you take with a metaphorical pinch of salt, as the entire black box industry is constructed on the back of planned obsolescence; but when I finally tracked down a

plasma TV in Harrods I could see his point. "This is the first model," the store's salesman explained with a clandestine whisper as he showed off the Philips Plasma TV. "If you order one, however, then they'll send the updated version," he promised, before admitting that a

third version was on the horizon. Sadly, my expectations of plasma TV proved too high. I was expecting a moment as monumental as watching *Dr Who* in colour for the first time on my parents' rented box or my father's absolute refusal to use the channel-changing buttons on the set after we upgraded to a TV with a remote.

By comparison, the Philips 42PW9902 just looked like a big telly, and one with an image that did not even seem as crisp as many of the normal televisions on display (a common trait, it transpires, of plasma TVs). It didn't help that the channel that it was showing was badly tuned (something which digital TV broadcasts promise to eradicate, although anyone with a digital mobile phone would have justification for scepticism).

And the whole point of the technology (that it is thin enough to hang on a wall) was undermined by a rather bulbous stand on which sat a rather bulbous control box. Still, it hasn't stopped these £11,999 sets being sold by the store at a rate of around one a week (the current waiting time is around a week, if you're interested).

Personally, the cathode ray-tubed, 32-inch widescreen Philips 32PW9323D nestled beneath the

plasma TV was far more inviting: a silvery green casing, razor sharp image, a tubular tripod, a glass shelf for the VCR/DVD and, at £1,599, a fraction of the price. However, the 32-inch widescreen Loewe Credo (£2,500) shaded it. Belying its deep cathode ray-tube hum, which

is wider than a door-to-door electricity salesman, the Credo's minimalist features make it look remarkably streamlined.

More importantly, it has an exceptional visual clarity, does cool tricks (everything from picture-within-a-picture multiple images to child lockable channels) and has an impressive sound, courtesy of a subwoofer hidden in the stand (a further £500 but essential). The guts of the speaker are designed by hi-fi boffins Linn, so that, whatever this TV says, it says it loud. And this one was saying: "I'm Arctic-coloured and I'm proud."

Even the design detail under the screen coolly slides back to reveal sockets for headphones and a games console, precluding the need to crawl around behind the back of the set ever again. And, if money is no option, then Loewe does an integrated video player, which hides in the cabinet and can be operated by the TV remote, and an integrated hi-fi system for the full surround-style experience. Loewe is also about to enter the plasma TV market – it will be interesting to see how it can surpass the Credo. Who knows, maybe it will have a button to make *Gladiators* bearable.

SHAUN PHILLIPS

DIGITAL TV

WHAT IT IS: digital transmission resulting in better quality broadcasts and teletext services. Service providers/hardware: Either a new satellite dish and box-top receiver (£159.99-£199.99, through Sky), or terrestrially via an existing aerial and receiver (£200, through ONdigital).

Subscription/programming: Sky (£6.99-£30/month, with pay-per-view on top); ONdigital, around 15 programmes and £8/month. Start date: 1 October on Astra. What if I don't want it: Analogue will continue for the next 10 years but digital may interfere with it.

Other problems: You will be attached via a phone line. Big Brother won't exactly be watching you but he'll know exactly what you've been watching.

TV TECHNO TALK

ARTIFACTS BLOCKING effect due to some digital processors inability to cope with fast movement on some widescreen systems. 100Hz Advanced TVs renew the image twice as frequently as traditional screens to cut down screen flicker.

16:9 Widescreen dimensions (width: depth). Normal TVs are 4:3 ratio.

Zooming Technique of increasing size of a 4:3 transmission to fill whole screen. Some televisions allow you to stretch images without cutting off the top and bottom of the picture.

28.2° East Directional satellite dishes face. For those using existing dishes to receive digital satellite, a ladder will be needed to switch the position to 19.2° East.

THE HARDWARE

THE PLUSES (and minuses) of Plasma TV
AKAI DP-W4200 (£12,000) This is the thinnest of the plasma TVs – only 84mm deep (noisy fans).
Fujitsu PlasmaVision "42" (£9,200) Reliability. Fujitsu produced the first plasma screen (the black could be more black).
Grundig PlasmaTron (£11,000) Quiet fans and 160° viewing angle.
Pioneer PDP-V401E (£8,220) The price (the ratio – it's only 4:3).
Thomson Wysius (£11,000) This has the sharpest image and makes for a bargain package deal – for an extra two grand, they throw in a DVD player, amp and speaker system.
Philips 42PW9902 (£11,999) User-friendly (the control box is very boxy).

IF I WIN THE LOTTERY TONIGHT...

RON ATKINSON, SOCCER SUPREMO



OBVIOUSLY THE first thing that I would do is look after all my family and make sure that they were provided for. I've got a daughter and a grand-daughter and various other family I'd look after. I'd give some to charity and the only indulgence I'd have, I think, is a Lear jet.

I'd love that. I'd love to be able to turn up with one and say: "Come on lads, I'll give you a lift." I'd use it like a taxi – it'd be a laugh. It would be fitted out with all the gear: there'd be a video to watch films, and a bar. It'd be brilliant. I could go on holiday with the family to the West Indies or America, or get the lads round and take off for the weekend.

I'd make sure my daughter had whatever top-of-the-range car she wanted. My wife drives a Mercedes, so she'd just trade it in for a newer model. I'd get a Bentley coupe in any colour except red.

I wouldn't give up the day job. I'd still do the things I do now, it would just be a little bit more convenient.

We wouldn't move house. We might do eventually but we are very happy where we are in Worcestershire. We might buy a place here and there, Barbados maybe. We go to Barbados quite regularly so that would be good.

I might borrow Tiger Woods or Ernie Els to caddy for me one day. I'm a bad golfer but I enjoy it.

If there's any money over I'd buy a big yacht – with a 10-man crew – so I'd have somewhere to land the helicopter. I'd moor it in the middle of Birmingham. I wouldn't want to sail it, I'd just walk around it and say to my mates: "Look what I've got."

All these, of course, are only pipe-dreams, as I don't play the lottery. I don't get around to it. I don't really have any lucky numbers. If I was doing the lottery I would stick to the same numbers each week. And if I forgot to play one week and my numbers came up? It wouldn't bother me as I would have committed suicide! My wife plays the lottery, though. She might let me have that Lear jet.

Ron Atkinson's memoir *'Big Ron: a different ball game'* is published by Andre Deutsch at £17.99. Mr Atkinson – who has managed Manchester United, Atletico Madrid and Aston Villa, among others – is a member of ITV's football commentary team.

DIONA GREGORY

CHECK IT OUT

DESIGN EXHIBITIONS IN AND AROUND LONDON

SINCE ITS launch three years ago, 100% Design has gone from strength to strength. Not only is the show 40 per cent larger than last year, but finally the Italians (whose Milan furniture fair sets the standard for such events), have signed up in significant numbers.

This year's show comprises over 350 exhibitors from around the world who will be showing an inspiring mix of products from quirky light fittings, or elegant desk tidies, through to entire bathrooms. And, unlike many other trade fairs, 100% Design opens its doors to the public from 10am-6pm tomorrow, you will have the chance to not only admire some of the very latest designs by the likes of Philippe Starck, Jasper Morrison, Matthew Hilton, Nigel Coates and Michael Young, but also to buy them or, better still, commission a one-off.

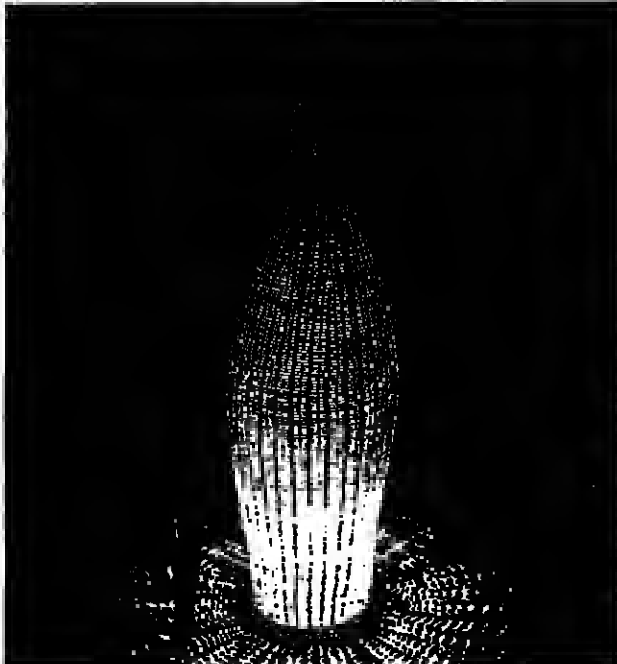
Back in 1995, when the show first opened, British designers were pinning their hopes on 100% Design as a life raft. Up until then, young designers were having to take themselves off to foreign furniture fairs such as Milan and New York, not only to secure orders from overseas buyers but in order to

meet buyers from British companies. Buyers, British and foreign, now have the event etched on to their calendars.

For further proof that the capital's contemporary design scene is thriving, one only has to look at the range and number of related events taking place this weekend: Walk 98 (11 design shops in the W11 neighbourhood), Designers Block (35 rooms in the Truman Brewery site in Brick Lane), Modern Ground at The 20th Century British Art Fair (one-offs by Mark Harvey, Michael Sodeau and Clarissa Bernal, among others), and, the joker in the pack, a show devoted to Italian design at Designers Guild on the King's Road.

Of these, Walk 98 (known last year as Westbourne Design Route 97) is the best known. The idea of staging a group event played out across a network of seven streets was inspired by the satellite exhibitions staged during the Milan Furniture Fair and sponsored by the Italian Interiors magazine *Interni*.

Focused on the area around Westbourne Grove, which is within easy striking distance of both 100% Design at Earls



Designs with a difference: an inspiring mix of products will be on display at this year's 100% Design trade fair

Court and London Fashion Week in South Kensington, Walk 98 encourages visitors to explore contemporary design in an easily digestible manner: organised window shopping. The route is marked with flags, and described on maps, designed by "fly". The tour starts in Talbot Road at The Judith Clark Costume Gallery, an experimental space used for promoting the study of fashion and historical dress. Fashion enthusiasts can



follow this with a visit to Olowu Golding, and then check out Duchamp's new shop.

At Adam Bray, visitors can admire Sophie Smallhorne's abstract colour studies, and around the corner on West-

bourne Grove Christopher Farr unveils his latest collection of rugs and flatweaves.

Space, one of the Capital's best design showcases, will be exhibiting Caned, an exclusive collection of woven cane light

sculptures by Michael Sodeau and the latest Murano glass vases by Milan-based designer Emmanuel Babled. Across the road, Themes & Variations is flying the flag for French Elegance, and will be tempting visitors with a selection of contemporary furniture by French designers such as Christian Astuguevieille.

Succession Manufacturing Ltd will show leather and oak furniture by William Wallace, and an exhibition of work by nine contemporary artists. Bill Amberg can always be relied upon to find new uses for leather (he quickly moved from handbags to walls and floors), and he has created a limited edition set of leather bowls with silver, aluminium and brass interiors.

Aero, purveyor of witty flat-pack household items (mirrors, lamps etc), is using the week to launch various new products, including Fridge Magnet Organisers designed by Graphic Thought Facility, and striking spun aluminium and glass pendant lights by Andrew Morton. Similarly, Bowles and Linares are launching new collections, while interior designers Carden and Ciniatti

have emptied their shop and are showing a film of their working methods by Spanish film maker Edmund.

The emphasis is on fun, and shopping is the order of the day, though browsers are welcome. If cutting edge design isn't your bag, but you know your home needs an aesthetic rethink, check out Focus 98 at Chelsea Harbour Design Centre, the London trade centre for the interior design industry; today is public day and designers will be on hand to answer questions, take orders and offer advice. The centre houses over 60 different showrooms including Belinda Coote Tapestries, Jean Monro, Colefax and Fowler, Ornamenta and Zofany.

100% Design, Earls Court 2 Exhibition Centre, London (0171-381 2993). Tickets £8 in advance, call today to book, or £12 on the door; Walk 98 runs until 29 September, the route is marked with flags, and starts in Talbot Road, Notting Hill (London W11), near the junction with Ledbury Road; maps can be picked up from any of the participants.

CHARLOTTE PACKER

Conversion traumas

Creating a family home from separate flats is harder than it seems. By Penny Jackson

In the middle of winter, Ed Cunningham looked from the basement of his Georgian house through the gap in the roof to the sky. His wife was expecting a baby and in three months' time, when it was due, they could all expect to be homeless as the owner of their rented house wanted it back.

If there had been an easier way to find the kind of home they have now created, the Cunninghams, would surely not have pursued the most difficult path of all. Like many others who have taken on the same challenge, the re-conversion of a house from flats to a single family home, it was far more of a challenge than it appeared on paper.

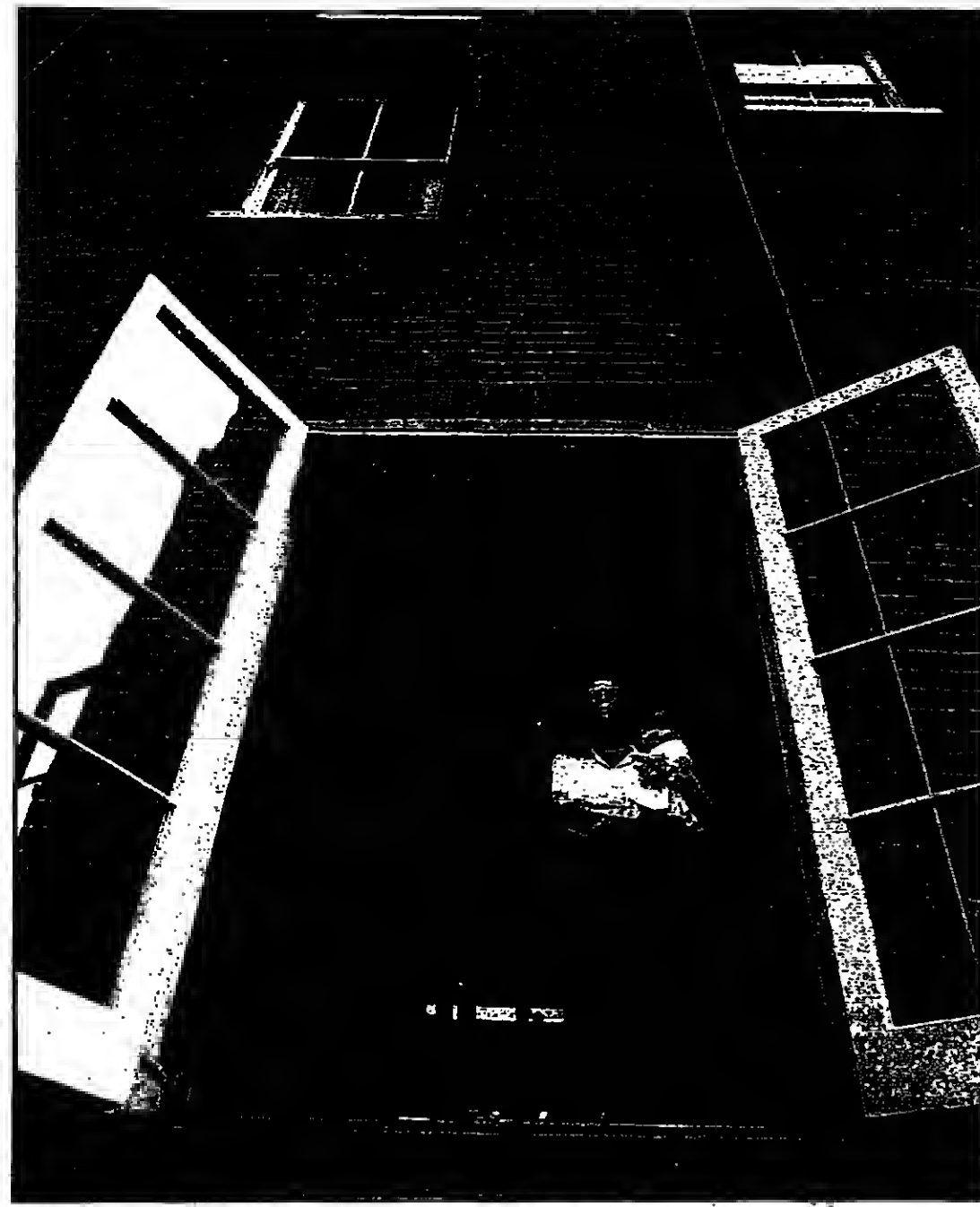
But the search for an unmodernised house with one careful lady owner, requiring only a new kitchen and bathrooms is likely to be fruitless. Ed Cunningham knows. He works for estate agents Douglas & Gordon and he was renting because he had no choice.

As he and his wife Sarah Jane describe the state of the house when they first came across it in Camberwell, south-east London, it is almost impossible to imagine as they point to the once rubble-filled tip that is now a garden through the lovely replicas of the original windows. They bought from a developer who was struggling with the same project.

"You may do it better but never imagine you can do it more cheaply," says Ed Cunningham. "Squatters had been living here in three flats and to move them on the council took away all the original floor boards. Instead they took all the doors off and used them as flooring. Nothing could be saved. Even the roof, which we thought was all right, had to be replaced as there had obviously been a fire there at some time."

At a time like this the most important relationship is between the owners and their builder. Get that right from the start and few problems are insurmountable. Ed Cunningham knew that and thought he had the perfect builders in mind. He trusted them and had recommended them to numerous friends.

"Lesson number one, if you have a good builder don't tell anyone," says Mr Cunningham. "We aren't talking to ours now and half the trouble is that instead of getting on with our house he was working for other people. In hindsight our biggest mistake was not to employ someone



A balcony would be nice: Sarah Jane Cunningham and baby at her incomplete home. Nicola Kurtz

to oversee the project. It may have cost us about 12 to 15 per cent extra but it would have been worth it. If the owner is out at work all day, there is no way he or she can keep an eye on things. In our case the so-called foreman was the carpenter who had no control over any of the men."

By the skin of their teeth the Cunninghams, by now with two children, managed to squeeze an extra month from their landlord, giving the builder a chance to at least make the house habitable. But pressure of time plays havoc with budgets and everyone, says Ed, should be prepared to spend some 15 to 20 per cent more than the original costings. "After any discussion with the builder about changes to the plans, put it in writing."

The ramifications of "reversions" are far greater than most people realise. Drains, wiring, plumbing usually need replacing completely since any modifications mean complying with modern regulations. Chris Avery, a chartered surveyor, specialises in turning large period houses back into family homes. "Buyers walk in and see only surface work. Most people underestimate the physical size of the job. If they

are up against deadlines they often don't allow enough time for preparation. On one hand they are looking at a fixed price and at the same time want to be on the site tomorrow. The two are not compatible."

As he speaks, he has a client's house shrouded in scaffolding, minus windows and with a deadline of two weeks. But he also has a team of workmen who will work late and at weekends if necessary - unlike Ed Cunningham's builder who never darkened the doors on a Saturday.

Avery acts as a managing agent, employing men he trusts directly as and when he needs them. "You have more control over a project as it enables you to change the shape as it unfolds. You may think you want

Buyers walk in and see only surface work. They underestimate the size of the job

to knock this or that wall down and it isn't until half way through you have an exact vision in mind. If a builder has given a costing on detailed plans it is expensive to change them."

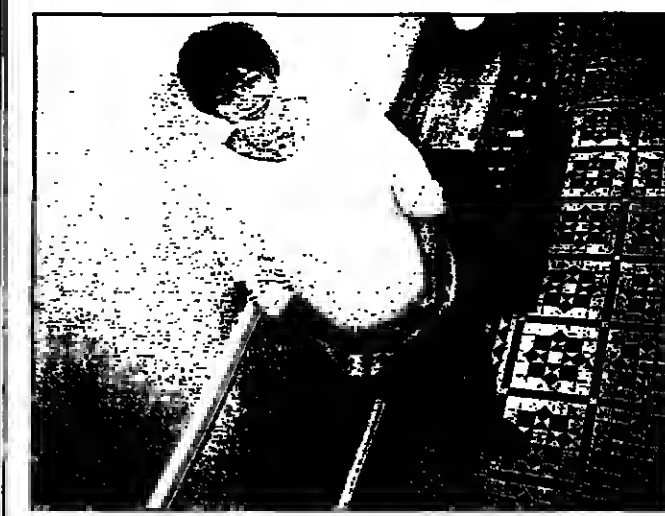
It also cuts down the potential areas for dispute because unless a job is done well the workman will not be paid and there will be no further work on offer. Ed Cunningham, on the other hand, paid the builder an agreed amount but did not know to whom it was going.

His struggle to get a floor re-done is an uphill one and his advice is always to keep back a reasonable amount for snagging. As frustrated buyers cruise the streets for signs of a decaying house in multiple occupation it is not a foregone conclusion that local authorities will give permission for its gentrification.

Chris Avery says they may refuse permission if they have a shortage of low cost housing in the area whereas in a conservation area they regret their earlier decision to allow flats to mushroom. It may not always be such a tedious exercise. One family applying for permission to turn their newly acquired flats back into a house discovered that the politician from whom they had bought it had never notified the council of its original conversion.

STEPPING STONES

ONE WOMAN'S PROPERTY STORY



Ellen Collins: stuck to west London. Emma Boam

MANAGEMENT consultant Ellen Collins has bought three properties since 1986. She now lives in a five-bedroom house in Ealing, west London, with her husband Paul, also a management consultant, and their two sons.

Ellen Collins had no ties with west London but chose it for her first purchase. "It's easy to get to Heathrow and I was born in Holland." As well as airport access she wanted an investment. "Why give your money to someone else?"

Ellen trawled the area's estate agents and soon found a one-bedroom Victorian conversion with access to a shared garden in Chiswick. She paid £50,000 with a 95 per cent mortgage and lived in the flat for seven years. "I loved it and it was fine until I found Paul," she says. They sold in 1993 for £80,000 making a "pleasing" profit in a less than buoyant market.

For their next purchase Ellen and Paul wanted a spacious but affordable house in the same area but this proved difficult. Eventually they found an Edwardian three-bedroom, two-bathroom purpose-built flat with "effectively more space than a house". They beat the vendors down by £10,000 and paid £105,000 in December 1993.

The couple enjoyed their "features-filled" home until the arrival of two sons bought new priorities. In 1997 they had their flat valued at £200,000 but instead of selling it, they decided that its location - a three-minute walk to the tube

- made it an attractive proposition to let out. Using the rental income as finance, they found a five-bedroom Edwardian house in Ealing, which Ellen calls "a quantum leap in terms of space and finance", but with a complication. They viewed in June 1997, exchanged in September at the agreed price, but only completed in August this year. Why the delay? "An elderly couple were retiring and moving away. They didn't want the trauma of worrying about their sale so agreed to sell on condition that we accepted a long period between exchange and completion."

Was the lengthy deferral a gamble? Andrew Grice, director of sales at Winkworth, Ealing, calls the Collins' move "a bit of a bet". "They took a risk and it paid off. During that time the market rose by more than 20 per cent."

GINETTA VEDRICAS

THOSE MOVES IN BRIEF

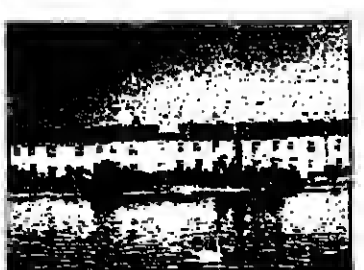
1986 - bought one bedroom Victorian conversion for £50,000 sold for £80,000 in 1993.
1993 - bought three bedroom Edwardian purpose built flat for £105,000, valued at £200,00 in 1997.
1998 - bought five bedroom house for £305,000, now worth £400,000.

If you would like your home moves to be featured in *Stepping Stones*, please write to Nic Cicutt, *Stepping Stones*, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL.

THREE TO VIEW

PRETTY AS A PICTURE

BUY NUMBER 30 Bath Road, a two-bedroom end-of-terrace, white-painted cottage in Emsworth in Hampshire and you can be sure a large slice of the price is down to the picturesque millpond directly in front of it.



"Because of their position, these properties are rarely offered for sale," says estate agent Neil Bone. "They can command a hefty premium, often in the range of some 30 per cent more than the equivalent property without the waterside position."

The view also includes Emsworth harbour - it's a popular sailing village, straddling Hampshire and West Sussex. The recently refurbished three-storey cottage has an additional 17ft bins by 14ft 10ins attic bedroom/studio, bedrooms with period fireplaces and a large kitchen. Bathroom and kitchen were replaced last year. At the back of the 75ft garden, there's a large timber garage. Perfect for the second home buyer. £180,000 through Henry Adams & Partners (01243-377773).

GARLIDGE COTTAGE, in the tiny North Downs village of Garlinge Green, falls conveniently into the area around Canterbury popular for its good schools and pretty countryside. The 19th century three-bedroom cottage was extended by the current owner, an architect, and has a 15ft dining hall leading into a large sitting room with open fire. Canterbury or Faversham have mainline rail links into London, the journey taking just over an hour, but its proximity to France has already attracted cross Channel interest. £180,000 through Calcott Maclean Standen (01233 812060).



FISHERMANS, a Grade II listed former lodge in Dartmoor National Park could hardly be in a more classically English spot. The grounds reach down to the river's edge and the Clapper Bridge. Some 21 miles from Exeter, the five-bedroom house has views across the river and the moor.



The 26ft drawing room has granite and stone fireplaces at each end. In addition there is a 22ft sitting room with exposed timbers, the dining room has panelled walls and the 19ft kitchen has a four-oven Aga and beamed ceiling. Two of the bedrooms have en-suite bathrooms. Outside, there is a detached two-storey barn. Price guide £245,000 through GA (01392 427070).

Nursing old hospitals into life

Antiquated hospital buildings often occupy key sites in our towns and cities. What happens to them can affect us all. By Robert Liebman



Derelict for years, Crossland Home in Virginia Park has been restored to its original condition

IT'S ASHES to ashes for us, but what happens to old, creaky hospitals when their time is up? Though some derelict hospitals succumb to the wrecker's ball, others are resurrected as residential developments. Hospital buildings tend to be architecturally distinct and are often set in mature spacious parkland. Even some hospitals situated in dense urban locations benefit from pleasant and extensive grounds.

"Some old hospitals are too small or their specialities have changed," says Jonathan Street, spokesman for North Thames Region of the NHS. "For modern acute care, you need modern buildings, for example with floors and ceilings that can be moved. Some of today's medical equipment is two storeys high and doesn't fit into Victorian buildings."

Property values, local politics and other factors help determine a hospital's long-term prognosis, which means that some manage to remain close to their healing roots.

Circle 33 Housing Trust and New Islington Housing Association converted the Old Royal Free Estate on Liverpool Road in Islington, providing 178 residential units in various sized flats and houses, including four homes specifically designed to wheelchair standards. The scheme includes a Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association day centre, and sheltered accommodation.

Circle 33 also redeveloped the Jewish Hospital in Haringey at a time when Tottenham had a large Jewish population and medical science was at a stage such that the facility was known as the Home for Jewish Incurables. The building became obsolete, Tottenham's demographics shifted, and the listed building on two acres is now 79 units of social housing.

In Kensington, the Royal Brompton is currently being redeveloped for luxury housing, and in Hampstead, Inverforth House and Mount Vernon were both recently refurbished. Indeed, before becoming a hospital, Inverforth House had been home to Lords Inverforth and Gurney Hoare and the banker John Gurney Hoare. In nearby Friern Barnet the erstwhile psychiatric hospital that is now Princess Park

Manor is not quite as luxurious but enjoys a sizeable expanse of mature parkland.

Many hospitals were built on spacious grounds in urban as well as rural locations not only because more land was available in Victorian times and earlier this century, but also because space had therapeutic and practical value. "An asylum should be placed on elevated ground and should command cheerful prospects, should be surrounded with land sufficient to afford outdoor employment for males, and exercise for all patients, and to protect them from being overcooked or disturbed by strangers." This was the view of the Commissioners in Lunacy, quoted by an architecture researcher from York University, Robert Mayo, in a report for the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors.

These principles are readily evident in Virginia Park, the former Holloway Sanatorium in Virginia Water, Surrey. Here, historical buildings designed by WH Crossland grace 24 acres of walled parkland. (To the general public, Crossland is probably better known for the Royal Holloway University in Egham, which he also designed.)

Derelict for many years, the 100-year-old property was destroyed by vandals for fun, and by thieves for profit. The thieves stripped lead from the gutters, which facilitated further water damage. But with English Heritage oversight and a punctilious restoration project mounted by the developer, Octagon, craftsmen in various disciplines returned the buildings very near to its original condition.

The Grade II listed chapel is

now a recreation hall housing a swimming pool beneath a hampshire roof. "The entrance hall, now fully restored, is a riot of brilliant colours, patterns and grotesque imaginary creatures, designed in accordance with the 'French Method' to distract and enliven the patients," Mayo notes.

Rich in mineral wells, Harrogate is also rich in hospitals and sanatoriums, many of which have had their day. Like the Holloway Sanatorium, the 1824 Royal Bath Hospital was disused and heavily vandalised until the developer, Crosby, rode to the rescue. On six acres, Sovereign Park has 78 units, including 13 apartments in the main hospital building.

Also in Harrogate, Crest Homes has secured the seven-acre Harrogate General Hospital site for 150

units. The Raven Group, a developer specialising in listed buildings, is currently involved in several hospital conversions such as St Mary's Hospital in Hereford, where nearly 100 new units will be built on 46 acres, and St Andrews Hospital in Norwich, where 90 units will appear on 15 acres.

In medieval Chester, Bryant is developing 100 units at the Royal Infirmary. Apartments will be available in the refurbished hospital building, and new-build mews and town houses are also being constructed.

Among the most spectacular developments will be Crest's Claybury Hospital: a full 235 acres of listed buildings, towers and turrets, ancillary buildings, park and woodland near the M11 in the London Borough of Redbridge. The sales office opens next year for a development expected to take seven years.

The term "ancillary buildings" does an injustice to an extraordinary complex of interconnected buildings with interior courtyards and surrounded by ancient woodland. Last century, soldiers dropped like flies in hospitals as well as on battlefields. "Lack of ventilation was identified as the key problem, and as a result hospital and asylum design was improved through the pavilion system of radiating ward buildings built to a high standard," Mayo notes.

"When we built the Chelsea and Westminster, we closed five hospitals," says Mr Street. "In building the new University College Hospital, we are closing UCH, Middlesex, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, and the Hospital for Tropical Diseases."

A defunct hospital may not die in the sense that, as with the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, it will be incorporated into the new facility. But others live on only because they have value as homes. Not everyone approves, but many fine buildings, would otherwise turn to dust.

Robert Mayo, *The Adaptive Re-use of Victorian and Edwardian Hospitals and Asylums*, RICS, 0171-222 7000. Estate agents: Bryant 01942 728728; Crest North 01423 501661; Crest South 01932 847872; Crosby (01423 524644); Raven 0171 235 0422; Octagon 01372 361777

COOLEST thing on 4x4 wheels
ORIGINALITY THE four-wheel drive had a purpose – a military one. Then, 4x4s suddenly became a style icon in 1970 with the Range Rover. Arguably though, a 1940s Willys Jeep with a GI on board is even cooler. Failing that, it is possible to make do with ex-military classics like the 1977 Dodge W200 I came across in Bedfordshire. With a V8 5.2 litre it ought to return 20 miles to the gallon. It should not break down either, having new automatic gearbox, radiator, propshafts, suspension and a recent engine service. All this for just £2,600. About what you'd pay for a ragged Seventies Range Rover – but a Dodge though is much cooler. Ask for Colin at Thatchered on 01234 740327.

JAMES RIPPET

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